

**THE SELF-CONCEPT FORMATION OF JUVENILE  
DELINQUENTS**

by

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the degree of**

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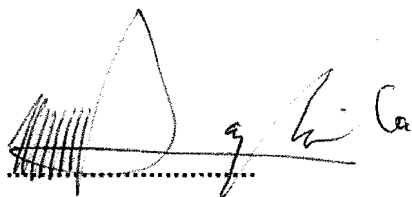
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**JUNE 2000**

## DECLARATION

Student number: 598-368-1

I declare that *The self-concept formation of juvenile delinquents* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M L Maphila', written over a horizontal dotted line.

SIGNATURE

(Mr M L Maphila)

14.09.2000

DATE

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**FINALLY, THE LORD ALMIGHTY GOD, FOR GIVING ME STRENGTH, COURAGE, THE ABILITY TO PERSEVERE AND TO CHANGE THINGS I COULD CHANGE AND LEAVE THE REST TO HIS GRACE.**

***KE A LEBOGA TATE WA MAGODIMONG; IN THEE I SEEK REFUGE.***

## **SUMMARY**

### **THE SELF-CONCEPT FORMATION OF JUVENILE DELINQUENTS**

by

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**Degree** : Master of Education (Guidance & Counseling)  
**Department** : Educational Studies  
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The purpose of this study was to investigate the self-concept of juvenile delinquents and to compare it with the self-concept of non-delinquent adolescents.

The aspects of the self and their role in self-concept formation were outlined. Psychosocial and moral development were discussed, as well as factors that affect moral development.

Juvenile delinquency was studied. Poverty and lack of parental care stood out as the main causes of juvenile delinquency. The South African juvenile justice system was also investigated.

The Adolescent Self-concept Scale was administered to 20 delinquent and 20 non-delinquent adolescents. The results revealed that there is a significant difference between the self-concept of juvenile delinquents and that of non-delinquents. The delinquent group was found to have a low general self-concept.

In order to determine how delinquent behaviour influences the self-concept and vice versa, one respondent from the delinquent group was randomly selected and an in-depth study was carried out.

## KEY TERMS

1. self
2. self-concept
3. self-talk
4. identity
5. juveniles
6. delinquency/ delinquent
7. juvenile justice system
8. Adolescent Self-concept Scale

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## CHAPTER 1

### PROBLEM STATEMENT AND AIM OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

Juvenile delinquents are a difficult group to deal with. Parents, teachers and the community at large complain that parenting is becoming more and more difficult as today's children "have no ears." At times our youth is referred to as *the lost generation* or a *generation at risk*. Delinquents are a heterogeneous group and in order to understand their problem, social and psychological factors ought to be studied (Kapp 1991:112-120).

Many people talk about the need to restore the culture of teaching and learning in South African Schools as the national matric pass rate is dropping at an alarming rate (Ndlovu, Bertram, Mthiyane and Avery 1999:3). Reasons given by teachers range from learners being out of control, not being interested in schooling as well as engaging in activities that are against society, norms and values. When these reasons are brought forward, the Vryburg High School's incident where learners pointed fingers at each other and the death of a 19 year old Grade 12 boy at the hands of a fellow learner comes to mind (Sowetan, 2 February 1999:4). Looking at the above examples, the question about the role of politics and socio-economic problems in delinquency arises.

Turning to the community, a 19 year old Bafana Bafana star was arrested for allegedly driving a stolen car. Besides the fact that the car was stolen, he was also driving without a licence, recklessly and negligently. A young member of the Protea Cricket Team (RSA National Squad) was arrested on charges of rape and afterwards released on R5 000.00 bail (Sunday Times, 13 May 1999:7). This is a serious cause for concern and one wonders how these youngsters feel inwardly when they start evaluating their actions when all has settled down, that is, after the deed has been committed.

The deteriorating matric results, the re-arrest of juveniles who were pardoned by the first democratically elected State President Mandela (City Press, 5 October 1997:1), the estimate that almost a quarter of criminals in our country are under the age of 21 (The Star, 18 July 1997:9), and the gruesome murder of three lecturers at Tompi Selek Agricultural College in the Northern Province, leave us wondering about the kind of the youth we have these days. Are their action symptoms that there are serious underlying problems that they experience?

From a distance, it appears as though the youth, in particular delinquents, are experiencing deep emotional trauma within themselves. Perhaps this study will help unravel this mystery.

From the examples mentioned above, it is clear that all the perpetrators are in the age range of 10 to 19 years, which falls within the legal age limit for delinquency, which is between 7 to 21 years (Kapp 1991:112-120). One can therefore view their behaviour as delinquency since these children should be tried in a court of law, after which remediation programmes for their misdemeanors could be implemented (Siegel & Senna 1991:12).

## **1.2 AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM**

Both local and international print and electronic media report on a daily basis about teenage misdemeanor. It seems that delinquent behaviour occurs across the board - at home, at school and in the streets.

In the Zebediela District for Education in the Northern Province, matric learners physically attacked a school headmaster in September 1998 as the parties were unable to reach an agreement regarding trial examinations. The question arises: why did these learners decide to use force to solve their problems instead of simple logic? Were intrinsic or extrinsic factors at play?

The news of these learners attacking the headmaster sent shock waves throughout the District Office of the Department of National Education in particular and the community at large. Due to this it was decided to investigate the youth's way of thinking and the driving force behind their thinking (self-concept) in relation to their actions (delinquency).

Delinquency is a universal problem and it affects everyone in society. Schools are no exception as The Sunday Times (31 January 1999:5) printed an article entitled *Schools gripped by fear*. This article reported that "...gun-toting pupils, rampant gangsterism, rape on school grounds and intimidation..." is a daily problem in our schools. Another article in the same paper, entitled *From frying pan into the fire*, referred to a family who emigrated from South Africa to England, only to find that even in their new country, life was difficult as "...girls as young as eleven years will swear at you if you refuse to buy booze and cigarettes for them".

The Sowetan (2 February, 1999:4) printed an article entitled *Cocaine bust: 3 held*. In this article it was mentioned that three people, one of them a 17 year old girl, were arrested for being in possession of cocaine to the value of R480 000.00.

Since a child is continually involved in self-identification in order to develop a self-image, (Raath & Jacobs 1993:12), one can argue that the girl mentioned in this case may have involved herself due to the pressure of the adults she was with, while in her own capacity she might not even have considered the thought. One can therefore argue that after she was arrested, the girl would have evaluated her behaviour (the self) according to subjective norms of either good or bad, which ultimately influences self-concept formation (Raath & Jacobs 1993:11).

The National Department of Education and the SABC-TV Drama Section produced a television series called *Yizo-Yizo*, which was broadcasted on national television. The programme aimed at outlining the anarchy that was gripping our schools at the time (Sunday Times, 31 January 1999:5). It was hoped that it would shed some light on the behaviour of our learners and that a solution to this problem may be found. Sadly the gangsters in the programme became national teenage heroes overnight, with new gangs rising up and naming themselves after the main characters. Instances of schoolboys

carrying knives and guns to school and raping girls at gunpoint may have been caused by exactly these programmes which were meant to address these problems (Pace Magazine, May 1999:18-21; Drum Magazine, 22 April 1999:9-13).

### 1.3 PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The awareness of the problem under discussion has brought the following questions to mind:

- What role does physical, psychic and spiritual development of the adolescent play in juvenile delinquency?
- What are the needs of a juvenile delinquent?
- What role does the self-concept play in behaviour and self-actualisation?
- Why do some young people become delinquents? What role does the peer group play in delinquent behaviour?
- Does the state have any juvenile justice system in place?
- Are there procedures for remediation and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders in the community?

### 1.4 PROBLEM SYNTHESIS AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

When the problem under discussion is analysed and evaluated, the question arises whether there is a difference between the self-concept of non-delinquent adolescents and that of delinquent adolescents.

The problem statement for this research is:

Is there a significant difference between the self-concept of non-delinquent adolescents and that of a delinquent adolescents?

As this study focuses on the self-concept of juvenile delinquents, it was decided to compare the self-concept of juvenile delinquents with that of non-delinquents. This led to the postulation of the following research hypothesis and null hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant difference between the self-concept of juvenile delinquents and the self-concept of non-delinquents.

Ho: There is no significant difference between the self-concept of juvenile delinquents and that of non-delinquents.

## **1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

The study aims at investigating the following aspects:

The formation of the self-concept and self-evaluation.

The way in which delinquents evaluate themselves.

Causes of juvenile delinquency.

## **1.6 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

The moral decay that engulfs our society at large, seems to have changed the social character of our schools. This prompted one to look into the issue of behavioural problems, as well as how juvenile delinquents view themselves.

The statistics as indicated below show that the juvenile problem this country faces is a massive one.

**Table 1.1: Juvenile delinquency statistics for the Western Cape: 1997**

JUVENILES ARRESTED IN 1996		
TOTAL	Age 7 - 13	Age 14 - 17
12 483	1 834	10 649

OFFENCES						
Murder	Attempted murder	Rape	Robbery and armed robbery	Assault	House breaking	Theft
256	115	406	865	600	2 960	1 583

OFFENCES					
Car Theft and theft from motor vehicles	Possession of dangerous weapons	Possession of unlicensed fire arms	Arson	Indecent assault and sodomy	Drunkenness
1 442	68	214	27	65	75

OFFENCES	
Possession of dagga	Possession of mandrax
373	51

Statistics source: The Cape Times , 1 May 1997.

The hope is expressed that the results of this study will shed light on who juvenile delinquents are, on how they come to behave as they do, and how they evaluate themselves after the acts of aggression against individuals and property have been committed.

## 1.7 LITERATURE STUDY

The self-concept and juvenile delinquency will be investigated. Various aspects which influence development, will also be examined. Particular attention will be given to the



physical, psychic and religious aspects as well as to psycho-social development according to Erikson and the moral development according to the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg.

Factors that lead to juvenile delinquency will be outlined and the South African juvenile justice system will be carefully examined.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research will follow a two pronged approach. The literature study will be supplemented by an empirical research, which will follow both the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

### **1.8.1 Quantitative research**

The Adolescent Self-concept Scale (ASCS) will be used for this purpose.

Adolescent Self-concept Scale (ASCS)

This medium consists of the following dimensions:

- Physical self : The self in relation to it's physical aspects
- Personal self : The self in relation to it's psychological aspects
- Family self : The self in relation to the family
- Social self : The self in relation to social environment
- Moral-ethical self : The self in relation to moral and religious norms
- Self-criticism

The Adolescent Self-concept Scale will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The empirical research will involve 40 adolescents ranging in ages 16 to 19 years and ranging from Grades 10 - 12. In order to control the gender factor, only boys will participate in the research. There will be 20 members in the group of delinquents and 20 members in non-delinquent group.

The legal delinquent group will be selected from youths in police cells, prisons and places of safety of the Department of Health and Social Welfare.

The non-delinquent and the social delinquent group will be selected from schools. Cumulative record cards and school attendance registers will be used to verify whether the learners suite the categories in which they will participate.

### **1.8.2 Qualitative research**

In addition to comparing the self-concept of the two groups as outlined above, the research will also attempt to investigate the internal self-talk of one of the group of juvenile delinquents. It is hoped that the planned ideographic study will shed light on how the individual's self concept is influenced by his actions, and vice versa. To ensure that the information obtained from the respondent used for the qualitative research is complete, two additional media will be used. The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and an interview will be conducted with the respondent.

## **1.9 DEMARCATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY**

This study will focus on the following:

- The role of the self-concept in the process of self-evaluation
- Psycho-social development
- Moral development
- Delinquency; it's causes and the historical background
- Characteristics of juvenile delinquents
- The South African juvenile justice system

The research will take place in schools, Places of Safety of the Department of Health and Social Welfare or Police lock-ups.

## **1.10 EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS**

Some of the concepts that are frequently used in this study are explained below.

### **1.10.1 Self-concept**

Rogers (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:466) defines the self-concept as an organised consistent whole that is made up of the perceptions of the characteristics of the I or me, and how these perceptions relate to each other. Rogers goes on to say that the self-concept is a fluid and changing gestalt, a process, which is an entity at any given moment.

According to Higgins, (1987:316), the self-concept differs from one situation to the next, such that there can be an actual, ideal and an ought-to-be self. The actual self refers to the individual's present and actual perceptions, whilst the ideal self refers to the self that one wishes to be. Markus and Nurius (1986:954) argue that the *ideal* and the *ought-to-be* self-concepts refer to what an individual is destined to be, therefore they are important and should be pursued.

From the above exposition, one feels that the self-concept is the core, the nucleus and the pillar or the anchor of personality, and/or an image an individual has about him- or herself. This may be the image one is consciously aware of, which can be used to evaluate oneself.

### **1.10.2 Moral development**

Morality is what a particular community regards as acceptable or unacceptable and constitutes the norms and values of a particular society. It should be noted that what is morally good in one community is not necessarily good in the next. Morality has to do with the ethics of a society. Moral development is therefore concerned with learning to

distinguish between right or wrong, good or bad, and acceptable or unacceptable behaviours within a particular society (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1988:274).

### **1.10.3 Juvenile delinquency**

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988:122) view juvenile delinquency as willful and deliberate behaviour of a juvenile in violation of the law and social norms. Juvenile delinquency includes behaviours such as truancy, running away from home, disobedience, et cetera. Juveniles who commit these types of acts are called social delinquents.

Behaviour such as murder, rape, culpable homicide and public violence are actually crimes, but when committed by a person between the ages of 7 and 21 years, it is considered juvenile delinquency (Kapp 1991:112-120). This differentiation is made in order to protect children against the harsh discipline that they may have received, were they adults. A juvenile who is arrested under the delinquent acts is called a legal delinquent.

## **1.11 PLAN AND PROGRAMME OF STUDY**

### *Chapter 1*

This chapter comprises the background, the goal of the study, the statement of the problem, motivation for the study, research methodology and the demarcation of the study.

### *Chapter 2*

This chapter comprises the literature study of the self-concept. It will also look into social development according to Erikson's theory and moral development according to the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg.

### *Chapter 3*

The theory on juvenile delinquency will be studied in this chapter. The focus will be on the historical background of juvenile delinquency, the characteristics of juvenile delinquents, the causes of juvenile delinquency as well as the juvenile justice system in the Republic of South Africa.

### *Chapter 4*

This chapter covers the empirical research design and methodology. The media to be used in the research will be outlined and the selection of respondents for nomothetic and idiographic research will be planned.

### *Chapter 5*

In this chapter the results of the empirical research will be outlined and interpreted.

### *Chapter 6*

In this chapter the research hypothesis will be evaluated. A summary of findings and conclusions from the previous chapters will be given and recommendations will be made.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE FORMATION OF THE SELF-CONCEPT

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Children's behaviour vary from one situation to the next. This leads people to hold particular views about children, which are also subject to change. It is therefore not surprising that parents are usually very quick to take a stand and defend their children whenever they are accused of being involved in misdemeanors. The usual defense is, *I know my child, he is good and will not even hurt a fly*. Afterwards, when it becomes clear that the child did indeed commit the crime, parents usually say that the child must have been influenced by the bad company that he keeps. A good example which confirms this approach by parents were the comments made by the father of an SANDF member who robbed and shot at people and then took his own life. The father claimed that his son was driven to despair by his colleagues (Sunday world, 12 March 2000:6).

The question that arises is: Why do children behave as they do? In trying to answer this question, this chapter will examine the self-concept, psycho-social development according to Erikson, as well as the moral development of the child and adolescent according to Kohlberg and Piaget.

#### 2.2 THE SELF

The term self often creates controversy since it is used differently by various researchers. Rogers (Meyer *et al* 1989:70) uses it to refer to the person's view of himself or herself, whilst Jordaan and Jordaan (1989:683) regard the self as the core of personality. Jung (Meyer *et al* 1989:78) views the self as the central archetype, which forms the nucleus of the personality around which all other systems cluster. He states that "...it is a God with us". Raath and Jacobs (1993:9) regard the self as a core of where the individual's awareness of different aspects of his personality starts. Harre (1998:9) proposes that the self is the singularity a person feels himself to be, and a site from

which a person perceives the world as well as a place on which to act. The researcher believes that the term singularity as used by Harre refers to the individuality or the uniqueness one feels him- or herself to be.

From the definitions above, it emerges that most theorists agree that the self is the core of personality which mainly determines a person's way of life. In order to better understand the concept self, we will look at the concept personality.

### **2.2.1 Personality as complementary to the self**

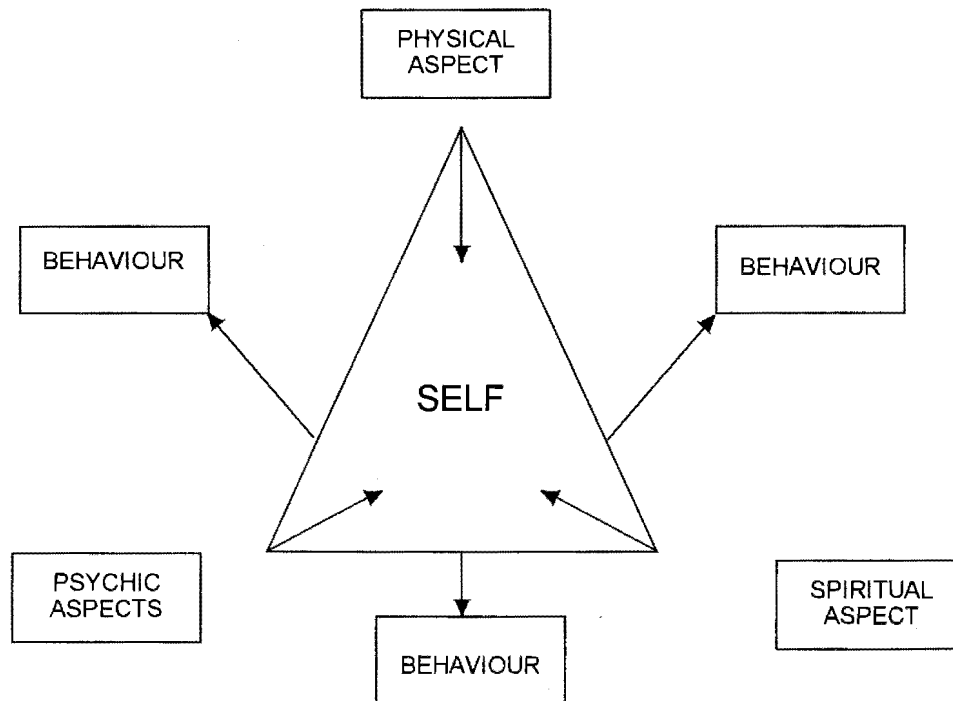
According to Meyer *et al* (1989:7), personality includes the individual's social dimension, and it refers to the totality of all the physical, psychological and spiritual characteristics, which determine the individual's behaviour.

From the above definition of personality, it stands to reason that the self and personality can not be separated from one another. These concepts are therefore complementary and supplementary. It also emerges that the self is made up of the following aspects:

- The physical aspect.
- The psychic aspect.
- The spiritual aspect.

Since the self is the core of personality, it stands to reason that people's behaviour and all their actions are affected by it, therefore behaviour may be seen as being determined by the interaction between the individual's physical, psychic and spiritual aspects of personality as represented in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1 The interaction between the physical, psychic and spiritual aspects of the self**



(Raath & Jacobs 1993:26)

Raath and Jacobs (1993:9) point out that the various aspects that make up the self assist the individual in acting out various life roles. These roles are said to be very important in the emergence of the real self and self-concept and ultimately self-actualisation. The various roles may include being a learner, a worker, a sports person, a child, et cetera. With every role that is adopted, the person refers to him- or herself as *I as child, I as student*, et cetera. One can therefore argue that the various roles assist with identity formation.

Oyserman and Markus (1990:141) speak of the possible selves, which play a very important role during adolescence. These possible selves are defined as the individual's self-relevant expectations for the future, which include what a person hopes to become, expects to become, or even fears of becoming.



Berger (1998:4-5) indicates that the self is made up of the following components:

- *The known self*

Berger (1998:4-5) states that the known self comprises the individual's weaknesses, strengths, likes and dislikes. It develops through the feedback that individuals receive from significant others. The ability to know oneself is hampered by the negative baggage people carry and suppress in the subconscious, therefore the known self is semi-conscious.

- *The secret self*

This is the unconscious part of the self where the negative baggage is suppressed and stored. This seems to be the cause of negative talk about oneself which results in a negative, unrealistic self-concept, and which may ultimately result in negative behaviour.

- *The ideal self*

This is the self that one wishes to become, that is, what an individual may dream of becoming in the future. A problem that is often caused with regard to the ideal self is that a discrepancy may exist between the ideal self and the real self. If there is a large gap between these two, the individual may experience frustrations, anxiety and stress (Berger 1998:4-5). This may lead to the development of defense mechanisms to such an extent that deviant behaviour such as juvenile delinquency may develop.

- *The false self*

Some children are experts at faking good behaviour and very good at pretending to be what they are not. Rogers (Moller 1995:214-241) refers to this as incongruence between the self and the self-concept. In doing this, these children are trying to compensate for the gap between the ideal self and the real self.

Berger (1998:4-5) points out that this brings about emotional conflict in the individual and requires energy. This seems true as coping mechanisms are required in order to maintain the cover up. The individual may not be able to self-actualise, as there is an incongruity between behaviour and the self-concept.

– *The higher self*

Berger (1998:4-5) points out that this is the super conscious which helps us to understand others, the universe and ourselves. It houses people's deepest values, ethics and morals, the desire to know the truth and ultimately to experience inner peace.

## 2.2.2 Aspects of the self

The various aspects of the self will now be discussed briefly.

### 2.2.2.1 *The physical aspect*

The physical aspect of the self refers to the concept individuals have regarding their appearance, sexual appropriateness, the importance of their bodies in relation to their behaviour and the prestige their bodies give them in the eyes of others. To emphasise the importance of the physical appearance, Kaiser (1990:95) states that through the body as well as other objects which surround ourselves such as cars, clothes and even bumper stickers, we communicate with others and with ourselves.

Raath and Jacobs (1993:17) see the physical image of an individual according to body parts, with each part having a specific task, and depending on its importance, it will be higher or lower on the scale of the individual's concept of his physical self.

Children view their physical aspects differently at various developmental stages.

In order for young children to self-actualise, they need to be physically strong. In order to gain the necessary strength, nourishment becomes a necessity. It is through nutrition

that children form relationships with significant others, starting with the mother during breastfeeding. These relationships are very important in the formation of the self-concept and it is therefore imperative that young children should experience love, care, trust, respect and honesty.

Nutrition enhances motor development to the extent where the child is able to sit, crawl, climb and grasp. In this way children are involved in the exploration of their environment with the help of their bodies. This exploration assists the child in identity formation and therefore self-concept formation (Louw, Van Ede & Louw 1998:167).

Research indicates that young children are unable to differentiate between themselves and the environment. This implies that the self and the environment, that is, people, objects, et cetera, are fused together (Moller 1995:259-290). As children's development progress they become aware, through visual and tactile exploration of the body, that they are separate entities from the environment (Kaiser 1990:96; & Mampa 1995:37).

Louw *et al* (1998:211) point out that it is self-awareness which heralds the development of the self-concept.

As children grow, the identity they have developed in the early stages becomes firm to the extent that they are able to recognise themselves. Children describe themselves in terms of physical attributes such as *I am a boy, I am tall*, et cetera.

Later on children start viewing themselves beyond the physical posture. They start to see the importance of possessions. This is noted in their assertiveness over ownership of objects. Louw *et al* (1998:248) argue that the struggle and assertion over objects should not be seen negatively or as selfishness, but be regarded as a sign of the development of self-definition. In this stage children are defining boundaries between themselves and others. According to Allport (Moller 1995:259-290) this is self-extension. This self-extension helps with the formation of the self-concept.

With the increase in motor skills, boys become more active and show more strength than girls, which assists in consolidating identity formation, which in turn leads to self-concept

formation, as an individual may reveal his characteristics in extending himself, and therefore discover his likes and dislikes. In this way, an identity is being formed.

During adolescence the physical aspects of the self become very important. The adolescent is grappling to arrive at a realistic and comfortable self-concept. At times this brings the adolescent in conflict with the parents, for example boys wearing earrings and painting their nails, while girls wear trousers, et cetera. To very conservative parents, especially the African rural parent, this is regarded as disrespectful, taboo and unethical. Leboho (1999), a member of the Zion Christian Church, explained how he burnt the pair of trousers his daughter brought home after a visit to her cousins in Johannesburg. He maintains that it is not right for girls to wear trousers, as it is unchristian and unethical. Cases like these may lead to children developing negative coping mechanisms. A girl may for example dress the way her parents expect her to, but when she leaves home, she will change into a pair of trousers kept at a friend's house. This in turn may lead to the experience of feeling guilty, as the behaviour is against the norms the adolescent is required to adhere to.

Kaiser (1990:133) argues that physical attractiveness during the adolescent stage is important to such an extent that adolescents who deviate from the appearance norms or ideals, are likely to be rejected and belittled by their peers. Therefore many adolescents spend money on exercise equipment, diets and famous label clothing. Most young people join health clubs, which emphasise physical strength through physical training. All this is done to enhance the physical appearance, and therefore boost the self-image and the self-concept.

Heterosexual relationships start during adolescence. The best partner for the adolescent is the one who is physically attractive. Physically beautiful people are held in high esteem. As far as females are concerned, a slender attractive girl can be expected to have a more positive self-image than a plain looking, plump girl.

In conclusion one may argue that it seems as though the overall self-concept is influenced by the image one has of himself.

### 2.2.2.2 *The psychic aspects*

Meyer *et al* (1997:103) point out that the psychic aspects of the self include all the things a person is aware of, which can be understood logically and explained by reason. Furthermore, these aspects assist a person in adapting to reality.

Awareness implies a sense, but Biology has taught us that all sensation is interpreted and finalised in the brain. One can therefore argue that the psychic aspects of the self refer to all the activities that take place in the mind, whether consciously or unconsciously.

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988:185) indicate that the psychic aspects include the affective, cognitive and the conative aspects of the individual.

These aspects will be discussed briefly.

#### (i) *The affective aspect*

The affective aspect entails the emotional state of an individual. As with adults, children experience emotions such as fear, anger, anxiety, love, jealousy and grief. The formation and the intensity of these emotions may be influenced by the relationships children experience in their involvement with the environment, as well as the significance they attach to the environment. Affectivity forms the basis for children's behaviour, and it therefore determines the self-concept.

During the early stages of childhood, children do not yet possess a high command of language and therefore express their emotions physically by crying, screaming, kicking or biting. The emotional attachment with parents is very important at this stage as it determines and assists in forming the children's self-concept. Kapp (1991:112-120) argues that if pedagogic neglect occurs at this stage, children may find it difficult in later life to show empathy to or maintain emotional relationships with others.

As soon as children acquire a reasonable command of a language, they are able to say what they want to, and the physical expression of emotions subsides. Their emotions become more stable, and they can be viewed as becoming emotionally mature. They may however still experience some emotional disequilibrium, as their emotions are easily aroused, and they may respond to this arousal through temper tantrums, real fears and unreasonable jealousy. Davis (1994:10) points out that children's experience of emotions may still be less permanent than that of adults.

Louw et al (1998:344) indicate that gender stereotyping has an influence on the nature and quality of emotional expression. Boys are encouraged to be tough, and are therefore not expected to cry when hurt, *as real men do not cry*. A boy who cries when hurt may be made fun of, belittled and often called names, while girls may be shunned when they express their emotions aggressively. This plays a crucial role in the formation of the self-concept. In order to obtain social approval, children may bottle up their emotions and not express them as they should. This may be very detrimental to the formation of a realistic positive self-concept. Such children may withdraw in fear of ridicule and develop some behavioural problems.

The most crucial stage in the formation of a child's self-concept is adolescence. Children at this stage are somewhere in-between childhood and adulthood and several changes are taking place in their bodies. Children view these changes with both positive and negative connotations. Most adolescents confess to the frustrations they are experiencing as some changes are accepted and welcomed, whilst they are disgusted by others which are then rejected. Motene (2000) explained that he felt so confused when he developed pubic hairs that he did not only ask his elder sister whether she has developed *such things*, but also insisted on showing her.

The frustrations experienced by adolescents arouse various forms of emotions within the children and they may be inclined towards having intense mood swings.

Louw *et al* (1998:434) point out that in most cases girls experience feelings of anger and depression, while boys usually are irritable and aggressive. Meyer *et al* (1997:434) indicate that adolescents are generally troubled by anxiety, guilt, shame and embarrassment when they fail to be as industrious as expected by the society.

(ii) *The cognitive aspect*

The cognitive, or intellectual aspect entails all aspects regarding perception, insight, knowledge and intuition and is closely related to experience.

Piaget (Morrison, 1998:257) distinguishes four stages of cognitive development at various age levels. These stages follow a particular order, although the age at which a stage is reached differs with individual children, with some reaching it faster, while others may reach it later.

Derbyshire (1995:13) calls the first few months of children's development "the think with the body" stage, as the body is the main instrument of exploration. The child grasps objects, sucks his thumbs and follows objects with his eyes. By doing this the child is busy forming a self-concept. At first the child's responses to the objects in the environment are undifferentiated, and they respond to all objects in the same way. One particularly interesting phase in the cognitive development of a child is "out of sight, out of mind" (Morrison 1998:257). The child believes that when he can no longer see the object, it has ceased to exist.

Later children enter the stage which Piaget calls the pre-operational period (Morrison 1998:257). At this stage children's mental development progresses faster. The development of language peaks and therefore vocabulary becomes abstract and children start to understand concepts such as *good* and *naughty*. This understanding happens only in terms of the consequences of behaviour (Mussen, Conga Kagan & Huston 1990:294).

During middle childhood the principle of "out of sight out of mind" does not apply any longer. The child is able to carry out mental activities and use logic to solve problems.

The child's thinking becomes less egocentric and more logical, but he or she still needs some concrete objects and referents in certain situations, therefore Piaget calls this period the concrete operational phase (Morrison 1998:257).

Davis (1994:13) points out that children understand that qualities of an object, for example, *mass remains the same even if it changes in shape*.

During adolescence children's thinking become more abstract and formal, and Piaget calls this stage the formal operational stage. The adolescent is pre-occupied with thinking about educational and vocational demands which he or she may be faced with in the near future. Other aspects which keep the children's mind at tandem are the changes in the nature of the parent-child relationships, emerging personal characteristics and concern over social, political and personal values. Children are also concerned about developing an identity. All of this takes place through intra-psychic self-talk which will lead to self-evaluation and then give direction to the formation of the self-concept. Conger (1991:149) points out that all these aspects are strongly influenced by cognitive changes.

Aspects which keep children's minds at tandem, assists them in becoming more logical and sensible in their debates and arguments. Debates enlighten the child as to the various spheres of life. It is no longer necessary for the presence of concrete objects to enable the child to come to conclusions, as children are able to handle numerous possibilities and form hypotheses (Morrison 1998:257). This is the stage where children become self-confident and the idea of *myself* crystallises. This enhances positive self-concept development.

Conger (1991:149) has observed that adolescents have a tendency of criticising the present social, political and religious systems. He states that this is due to the emergence of formal operational thought.

Rebelliousness is another feature of the behaviour of the adolescent. Elkind (Conger 1991:149), postulates that this behaviour is due to an intellectual ability an adolescent possesses, namely to compare what they think is possible to what is actually happening.



The researcher believes that it is the discrepancy between the real and the ideal as seen by the adolescent, which may lead to rebelliousness.

According to Oyserman and Markus (1990:141) it is during this stage that the expected possible self should balance with the expected feared possible self, or else deviant behaviour such as juvenile delinquency may start.

In conclusion one can infer that it is the adolescent's ability to think abstractly that plays a significant role in the formation of the self-concept. The researcher is of the opinion that thoughts lead children to self-talk and therefore to self-evaluation, which are the cornerstones of self-concept formation. If the self-talk is negative, deviant behaviour is usually the result.

(iii) *The conative aspect*

The conative aspects of development include needs, tendencies, aspirations, wishes, aims, drives and the will. These aspects comprise the basic driving force which give rise to and cause behaviour.

During the early stages children live for the moment and cannot think ahead to what the results of their actions might be. This curbs their aspirations and often leads to confusion and emotional turmoil. In their confusion, children usually react with temper tantrums such as hitting, kicking, screaming, throwing objects, et cetera. This stage requires sympathetic authoritative guidance from significant others. The children should be allowed to satisfy their aspirations, but some form of intervention is necessary when the child goes beyond his or her limits. The intervention should be fair, firm, consistent and gentle, that is, in meting discipline, parents should act with an iron fist in a velvet glove.

As development progresses and children enter school, their will to self-actualise becomes clear, which assists educators in easily providing assistance to them. The children in turn are able to grasp the subject matter with ease and the success which they achieve give them the assurance that they are on the right course to self-actualisation. This does not mean they should be left unattended as this may promote

licentiousness and does not lead to a positive self-concept and self-actualisation. Children should rather be taught to accept definite moral values and norms in order for them to have a code which will assist them in making the right decisions.

During adolescence children strive for independence and acceptance which causes the adolescent to set goals and to start acting towards achieving them. Gouws and Kruger (1994:148) point out that adolescents are usually intrinsically motivated to achieve their goals. Unfortunately some adolescents initially set unrealistic goals, but these are eventually replaced by more realistic ones as they grow older. When an adolescent is able to dispute the unrealistic goal and move towards a more realistic one, it implies positive involvement, experience and significance attribution which is the cornerstone for the formation of a positive self-concept.

Striving for acceptance and independence may also lead to conflict between adolescents and their parents, teachers and peers. This conflict should be properly handled. If it is not, it may lead to unwanted behaviour.

#### 2.2.2.3 *The religious aspect*

The religious aspect refers to a belief in a supernatural power. It indicates a belief in a reverence, a desire to please and the exercise of rites and rituals. These experiences can not be understood or explained through human reasoning, nor through any scientific knowledge or form.

Since religious or spiritual aspects do not refer to a dogmatic practice, it stands to reason that no religion should be considered as being more important and valid than the other, that is, all religions should be respected and treated equally.

Cohen (1994:108) defines religion as a system of expressing belief in a higher power that created the universe and oversees it.

Religion always has been and is still a rock against which one can lean during trying times, and a Divine power which is called upon when one is in need of help. Most

African people, whether they belong to a church or not, always call on the *badimo* (ancestors) to send their prayers to God. In certain instances they even ask for forgiveness from the *badimo*. Cohen (1994:180) points out that before psychotherapy existed, prayer and religious faith were there to help people to adjust during trying times.

Young children accept their parents' religion and are not able to ask critical questions as their verbal and intellectual modalities are still limited. This does not imply that children are immoral. The development of the moral and religious self-concept starts at the early stages by being carried to religious ceremonies by significant others. The Christian child is usually baptised during this stage and the parents resolve to take the responsibility of ensuring that the child grows up knowing about God and the church.

Children's acceptance and development of faith and religious attitude depends on the quality of the parents' faith. Parents do not only teach their children what they believe in, but the children also see their parents practice their religious beliefs, for example, children see their parents pray and they then pray with them. Christian children attend Sunday school and this is supplemented by the lessons in the Scriptures prescribed by the school syllabus. This strengthens the children's religious beliefs, practices, moral development and ultimately, the self-concept. One wonders whether this is still applicable in South Africa since some of the schools no longer conduct morning devotions, or these devotions are optional. These schools are said to be practicing the freedom of religion as dictated in the Bill of Rights, Chapter 2, Item 15(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa; Constitution 1996:15).

During the adolescent stage most religious communities commence with various rituals which lead children into the world of adulthood with regard to religious and moral matters. A Christian adolescent is formally accepted into the church's membership through confirmation ceremonies whilst a Jewish youth will undergo a Bat or Bar Mitzvah ceremony (Conger 1991:487). An African child undergoes initiation (see section 2.4.5).

At this stage children start to take responsibility for their beliefs, attitudes, commitments and life-style. The adolescent wants to have a personal faith, and many cultural myths become targets for evaluation and rejection. Adolescents are sensitive to hypocrisy, and

this makes religion vulnerable since throughout history, religion has provided a cloak for many people who have acted unjustly and inhumanly to others (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1988:195).

During the adolescent stages of development, children start to critically examine the faith they have been brought up to follow and accept at face value. According to Mussen *et al* (1990:643), this examination leads to steady erosion in the number of young people who view religion as a personal value.

Most adolescents seem to believe that churches are not trying and working hard enough to understand matters that they believe concern them, for example birth control, divorce, matters pertaining to sexuality such as sexually transmitted diseases, same-sex relationships, *et cetera*. One problematic contemporary religious issue is the one regarding women being ordained as priests. Most elderly people do not comprehend how this can be allowed to happen. Lerole (1999), a young Anglican boy, stated that he no longer attends church services due to the division amongst church members regarding lady priests, and that he was considering attending another church.

Another development in South Africa is the emergence of a number of religious sects such as the Jesus Movement, Children of God, Jehovah's Witnesses, The Universal Church, Satanism, *et cetera*. Mussen *et al* (1990:644) assert that some of these groups are informal and loosely structured and are held together by a concern for others, disillusionment with materialistic values and belief, often simple and direct and sometimes fundamentalist in personal salvation. The reasons why young people join such groups range from sudden or total conversion experiences following a period of ruthlessness and identity confusion due to poor parent-child relationships, extensive drug use, sexual exploration and life *on the road*. In the less authoritative movements, the youth seem to be expressing a satisfying and workable set of simple, straight forward values in a chaotic society, whilst other groups are very authoritarian in structure, and may require total conformity in both behaviour and belief, to the dictates of the leader (Mussen *et al* 1990:644).

From the above exposition it is clear that religion plays a very crucial role in the development of the self-concept of the children.

### 2.3 THE SELF-CONCEPT

The self-concept is a very complex aspect of personality. The complexity becomes apparent when one looks at the various definitions given by researchers.

Rogers, a self-concept theorist, postulates that development in life is based on an individual's subjective experience. He calls this subjective experience the self-concept. Rogers goes on to point out that the environment plays only a facilitating role in the actualisation of the individual's potential. However, the environment should provide for unconditional regard in order for the subjective experience to be actualised so that the self-concept can be formed (Meyer *et al* 1997:461).

On the contrary, Gerdes (1988:63) emphasises the importance of the environment in shaping the self-concept, and not only the individual's subjective experiences. However, she agrees with Rogers on the need for unconditional positive regard for the individual to become the best he or she can be, that is, the real self.

According to Rogers, the purpose of life is to become the *self that one truly is*. The striving to be the best that *one is*, provides individuals with the ability to evaluate their experiences. This assists individuals in developing a particular view of themselves, which Rogers calls the self-concept (Meyer *et al* 1997:468).

Rogers (Meyer *et al*, 1997:466) sees the self-concept as a *picture* which a person has about himself or herself and the value he or she attaches to himself or herself. This picture answers the question about one's looks, characteristics, how one judges oneself and the relationships one is involved in.

Gouws and Kruger (1994:6) sees the self-concept as an image a person has about himself or herself, which can be meaningful to the person.

Rice (1996:182) maintains that the self-concept is a person's way of perceiving himself or herself and that the perception may either be positive or negative.

Gouws and Kruger (1994:6) identify three interdependent components of the self-concept, namely *identity*, *action* and *self-esteem*.

(i) *Identity*

According to Gouws and Kruger (1994:86), *identity* refers to the meaning an individual attaches to him- or herself. It answers the question, *who am I*. One can therefore argue that *identity* implies knowing oneself, that is, both weaknesses and strong points.

Individuals who have developed an *identity* are able to take a particular standpoint, and are therefore assertive. Such people are able to say *I can* or *I can not*, *I want to* or *I do not want to*, and act accordingly. Those who have not developed an identity, experience what Erikson calls identity diffusion or confusion, and their actions are unrealistic and dependent on approval by significant others, for example, parents, peers or teachers (Erikson 1963:261).

Identification develops from early childhood, but peaks during adolescence when the young person starts to think abstractly. The significant others with whom the adolescent shares attitudes, ideals, philosophies, religion, politics, ethnicity, et cetera, are important sources of identity (Mampa 1995:19). Identities can be formed in areas such as the sex, career, ethnic roles, et cetera.

Erikson points out that a person who has successfully formed an identity is tolerant towards others; can face tasks independently and has a vision for the future (Erikson 1963:261).

(ii) *Self-esteem*

Gerdes (1988:80) points out that self-esteem refers to the evaluative aspect of the self-concept. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988:206) on the other hand, view the self-esteem as feelings brought about by individuals comparing themselves to others. Such a comparison is subjective and influences the self-concept.

A high self-esteem is associated with feelings of competence, satisfaction and worth, while a low self-esteem is associated with feelings of inferiority, incompetence, dissatisfaction and self-depreciation (Gerdes 1988:80).

A low self-concept calls for assistance in the form of therapy, in order to mend the self and all its facets.

(iii) *Action*

Gouws and Kruger (1994:6) point out that action indicates an occurrence of an event which individuals can subjectively use to evaluate their self-identity. These actions of individuals further imply involvement with their environment. The actions then call for reactions from significant others, which can be either positive or negative. In this way, individuals continue to evaluate themselves subjectively, and thereby form a self-concept.

In conclusion one can argue that the self-concept refers to the manner in which an individual describes himself or herself to the self. It is the dynamic schema individuals have about their feelings, prejudices, et cetera.

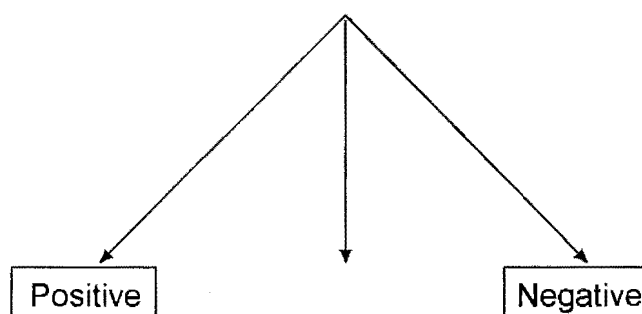
### 2.3.1 Characteristics of the self-concept

#### 2.3.1.1 *The self-concept is dynamic*

Raath & Jacobs (1993:26) postulate that the self-concept is not inborn, but is learned and developed through children's involvement, experience and meaning attribution throughout life. This implies that the self-concept is acquired through cognitive-affective developmental stages. The self-concept is therefore dynamic and changes according to circumstances, and particularly with developmental maturation.

The dynamism of the self-concept implies that it is like a pendulum that swings between two poles, which can be described as *positive* or *negative* as in figure 2.2. That is, the self-concept can be low or high depending on circumstances. This implies that a high self-concept at a given moment may be low at some time depending on the significance attached to one's own involvement, experience and significance attribution.

**Figure 2.2: Dynamism of the self-concept**

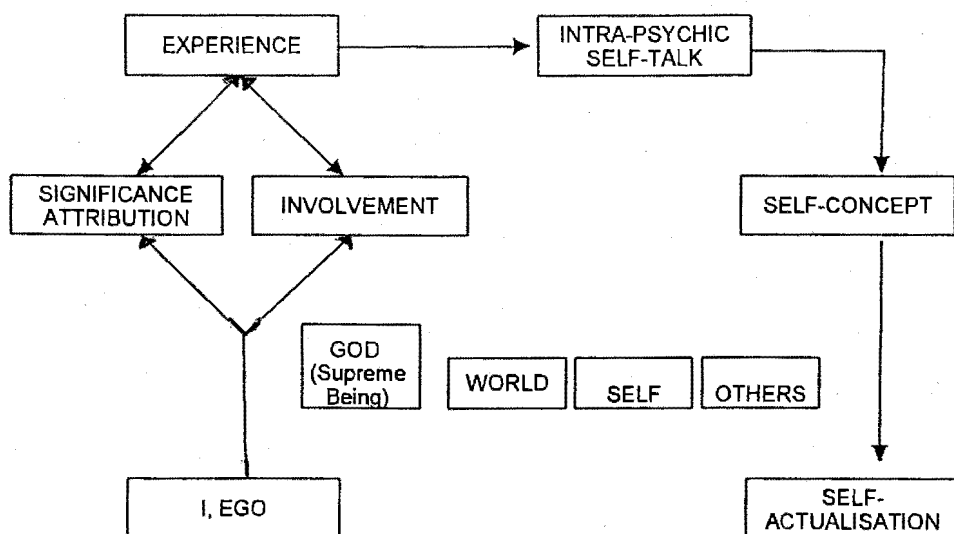


The fact that a high self-concept at a given moment may be influenced by circumstances and become low at another moment, implies that the individual is in constant subjective self-evaluation of his or her own actions. The criteria used for this subjective self-evaluation is what the individual thinks the significant others expect of him or her (Gerdes 1988:63; Gouws & Kruger 1994:92; Raath & Jacobs 1993:26)



Rogers (Meyer *et al* 1997:466) emphasises the dynamism of the self-concept when he defines the self-concept as an organised consistent whole, made up of the perceptions of the characteristics of the *I* or *me* and how these perceptions relate to each other. Rogers goes on to say that it is a fluid and changing gestalt, a process which is an entity at any given moment. A gestalt refers to a unified whole or a complete structure, the nature of which can not be revealed by analysing these parts (Reber 1985:682). Raath and Jacobs (1993:7) view *I* as the aspect of the self that is pure ego. The ego is part of the self, which is in touch with reality. It helps *I* as the subject to focus on the self as the object (Jacobs & Vrey 1982:31). In this way the ego *breathes* life into *I* in order for the individual to initiate action, and therefore get involved, experience and attribute meaning to life as in figure 2.3.

**Figure 2.3 Intra-communication according to the Relationship theory and its influence on the self-concept and behaviour**

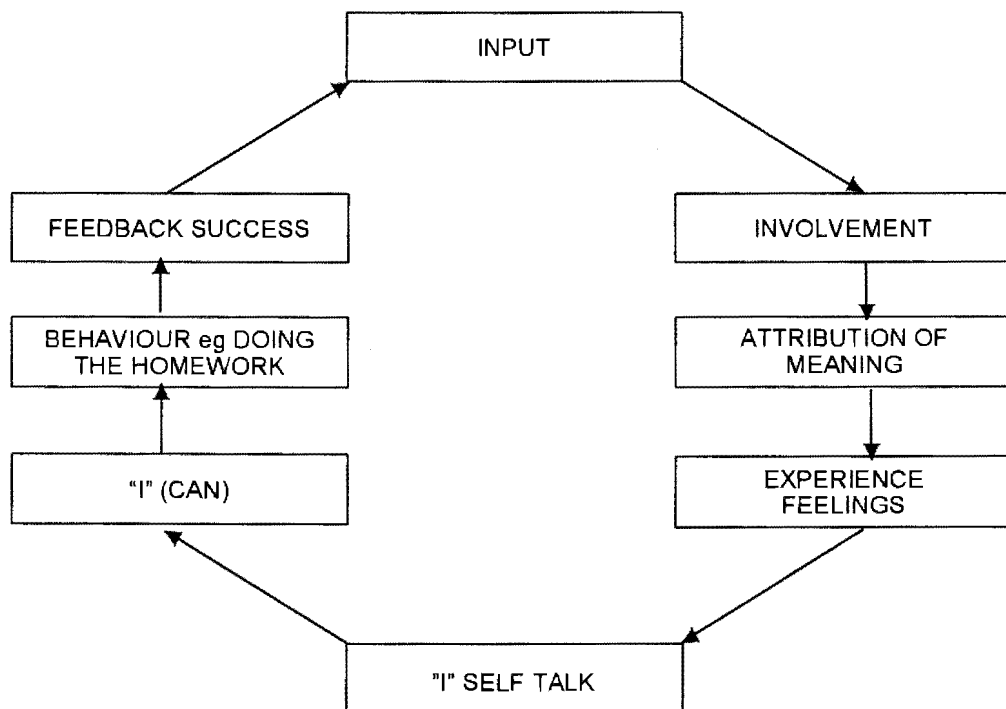


(Adapted from Jacobs and Vrey 1982:32.)

Through involvement, experience and meaning attribution, the individual forms relationships with the self, the Supreme Being, others, et cetera. The relationship formation is achieved through intra-psychic self-talk which leads to the formation of identity and to the ultimate end the self-concept (figure 2.3).

Children who have an established sense of identity may be able to tackle various tasks they are confronted with. These children use their feelings to explore such particular tasks. After exploring the task, they may be able to say; *I like it* or *I do not like it*. If the task is homework given at school, the child may say, *yes, I can do it*, or *no, I cannot do it*. The *I can* imply behaviour, which strengthens the self-concept or the idea of the self and gives feedback to the origin of the task as in figure 2.4.

**Figure 2.4 The process of self-actualisation**



If the child feels that the task is overwhelming and he or she can not do it, he or she may be withdrawn, become aggressive or develop other coping mechanisms that may cause negative feedback from parents, teachers, peers, et cetera. Negative feedback from significant others may lead to further problems such as truancy, lying, drug abuse and

many other forms of behaviour which is delinquent in nature. This may result in the formation of an unrealistic negative self-concept.

From the above, one can conclude that the self-concept is determined by a harmonious interaction between involvement, experience and significance attribution.

#### 2.3.1.2 *The self-concept operates in four dimensions*

The self-evaluation, which an individual undergoes to judge the self, occurs in four phases. These phases are negative and positive as well as realistic and unrealistic as indicated in figure 2.5.

**Figure 2.5: The dimensions of the self-concept**

	Positive	Negative
Realistic	1	2
Unrealistic	3	4

#### (i) *Realistic positive self-concept*

Children with a realistic positive self-concept do not only acknowledge and accept their weaknesses and strengths, they are able to use their strong points to bridge the gap between the weaknesses, and as such bring about equilibrium and stability within themselves. In this way negative qualities do not necessarily need to have a detrimental effect on the self-concept (Raath and Jacobs 1993:26).

(ii) *Realistic negative self-concept*

A realistic negative self-concept refers to a state where an individual who is not good at a particular task does not only know that, but also accepts it. This is a negative situation, but it is real. Such an individual will be operating at level 2 of figure 2.5.

The problem that is brought about by a negative realistic self-concept is over-generalisation where in certain instances, a failure in a particular field may be generalised in such a way that it affects all the aspects (dimensions) of the self.

(iii) *Unrealistic negative self-concept*

When a child fails in one aspect, for example one academic subject, he may generalise the inability to such an extent that he may feel worthless in all the aspects of life. Venter (1993:22) argues that "... hierdie toestand behoort egter net tydelik te wees. Na verloop van tyd sal hy besef dat hy onrealisties was, en sal sy hele selfkonsep nie meer negatief vertoon nie." Until the child realises that he has wrongly attributed too many negative characteristics to himself, he may believe that he is worthless in all aspects of life. According to the Ellis' Rational Emotive Theory, (Louw & Moller 1995:154-171) the child should be able to dispute his or her irrational belief about his failure, and acquire a realistic view of himself or herself and continue with life.

Raath and Jacobs (1993:28) postulate that at this stage the pendulum of the self-concept may swing to the negative pole and remain permanently rooted there (refer to figure 2.2). If such a child fails to realise that for every action there is reaction, he or she may be functioning at level 4 of figure 2.5. Therapy may be necessary to help such a person to realise that they are still worthy of being human.

(iv) *Unrealistic positive self-concept*

Some people are consciously or unconsciously positively biased towards themselves to such an extent where one may call them *experts at faking good*. Raath & Jacobs (1993:28) state that these people seem to have cut themselves off from their actual selves, whom they believe has very bad characteristics and are longing for an image of

what they think they ought to be. These children do not accept their weaknesses, and emphasise the positive aspects in order to please others. According to Rogers (Meyer *et al* 1997:468) these people live an incongruent life with the self.

#### 2.3.1.3 *The self-concept is unique*

It has been indicated that the self-concept is a product of involvement, experience and meaning attribution. It is imperative to indicate that no two people may experience a given situation and attribute meaning to it in the same way. For example, a group of learners may be involved with the same mathematics teacher, who teaches them at the same time, but they may not yield the same results at the end of the year. This may be ascribed to the concept each has about mathematics as well as the various aspects such as their aptitude, personalities, attitudes, self-esteem, et cetera. To this effect, Hattie (1992:67) points out that the self-concept develops independently under the influence of capabilities, treatment from others, relationships one forms with significant others, as well as an individualised pattern detecting mechanisms by long term memory.

#### 2.3.1.4 *The self-concept is multifaceted and hierarchical*

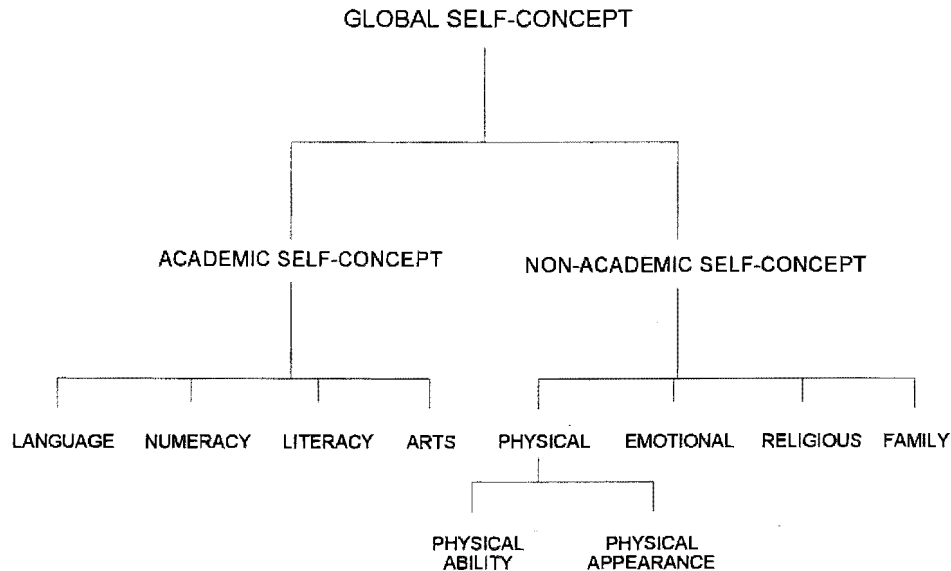
Most theorists (Bracken 1996, Bosma & Jackson 1990 and Raath & Jacobs 1993:26) agree that the self-concept is multifaceted. To emphasise this, Bracken (1996:467) postulates that children do not have a single one-dimensional self-concept, but develop many self-concepts. The following are a few of the self-concepts a person may have:

- Global self-concept
- Social self-concept
- Family self-concept
- Moral self-concept
- Physical self-concept

Hattie believes that the global self-concept is at the top of the hierarchy as indicated in figure 2.6. The global self-concept can be divided into academic and non-academic self-concepts. The academic self-concept can in turn be divided into various learning areas like literacy, numeracy, et cetera, whilst the non-academic self-concept can further be

subdivided into social, emotional, physical, religious self-concepts, et cetera. The subdivision for both aspects in the academic and non-academic self-concept may still be done further. Baumeister (1995:51-97) chooses not to refer to self-concepts, but to self-schemas.

**Figure 2.6 A hierarchical multidimensional model of the self-concept**



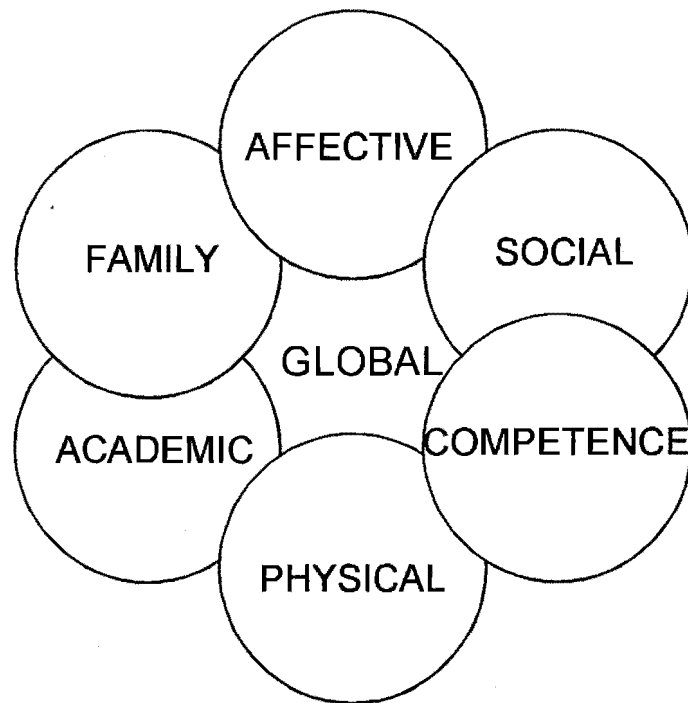
(Hattie 1992)

The hierarchical multidimensional self-concept as indicated in figure 2.6 seems to suggest that there is only one self-concept, which is the global self-concept from which other, maybe, *minor* self-concepts or self-schemas may emerge.

On the other hand, Bracken (1992:472) illustrates the hierarchical multidimensional nature of the self-concept with a venn diagramme. The illustration as in figure 2.7 shows the various aspects of the self-concept as overlapping. In this case, the global self-concept is in the centre of the diagramme, overlapped by all the other self-concepts. One can argue that in this case, the global self-concept, as with the *ego* in the *Relationship Theory* as indicated in figure 2.3 breathes life to *I*.

It seems the global self-concept sustains all the *self-schemas*. Bracken (1992:472) disputes this argument, and states that all the self-schemas or primary self-concepts contribute equally to the development of the global self-concept.

**Figure 2.7** The multidimensional self-concept scale according to Bracken (1996)



#### 2.3.1.2 *The self-concept of juvenile delinquents*

Literature points out that behaviour is learnt and not inherited or inborn. This implies that juvenile delinquency is acquired. The question is: How do children become delinquent?

The role of significant others is found to be very important in children's behaviour. The most significant person is the mother, who determines the quality of the child's experiences, involvement and significance attribution which in turn pave the way for the self-concept. Erikson (Hjelle & Ziegler 1992:192) indicate that the quality of maternal care is the cornerstone of trust, and children who acquired trust in the early stages find the world safe, stable and reliable.

Parental rejection leads children to have a negative view of themselves. Marshall

(1989:47) points out that inadequate love and care at the early stages of development by parents undermine the development of a positive self-concept. Coopersmith (Davis 1994:18) postulate that children who are rejected by parents and those who are reared in families with no clear rules and particular standards exist, generally tend to have a lower self-concept. This negative perception these children have, cause them to experience problems with taking initiative and being industrious. They may develop an inferiority complex, which could lead to a low self-concept (Rice 1992:250).

In conclusion, one can infer that children become delinquent due to bad experiences in early years. These children feel inadequate as they grow, they are afraid to venture, and develop a sense of inferiority which is unrealistic in most cases. In order to cope with the demands of life, they become aggressive either towards the self or the world.

## 2.4 PSYCHO-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACCORDING TO ERIKSON

Literature indicates that human development is a continuous process based on a universally valid interaction between biological (physical), psychological (psychic) and social factors. This interaction of various aspects of personality brings about conflict during development. One theorist who believes that development is about resolving the psycho-social crises of various stages of development in order to develop optimally, is Erikson (Louw *et al* 1998:507).

Erikson believes that each psycho-social stage has a developmental crisis as a nucleus, and that development is governed by the epi-genetic principle, which states that each developmental crisis must be worked through afresh during each stage in terms of the individual's total development at that point (Meyer *et al* 1989:157 and Gage & Berlinger 1991:105).

Meyer *et al* (1989:157) point out that Erikson's developmental theory is holistic in nature and implies that;



- unsuccessful resolution of a crisis at any stage complicates the handling of the ensuing crisis, while successful resolution makes it easier to deal with later crises; and
- an individual who has not satisfactorily resolved the crisis of one stage always has the opportunity to do so at a later stage.

Psycho-social development according to Erikson consist of eight stages which stretch from infancy through to old-age. As this study focuses on juveniles, the adult stages according to Erikson will not be discussed.

The following stages will be discussed:

- Basic trust versus mistrust (0 - 2 years)
- Autonomy versus shame and doubt (2 - 3 years)
- Initiative versus guilt (3 - 6 years)
- Industry versus inferiority (6 - 11 years)
- Identity formation versus identity diffusion (12 - 22 years)

#### **2.4.1 Basic trust versus mistrust (0-2 years)**

According to Hjelle and Ziegler (1992:191) this stage starts right after birth. The child has just left the safety of the mother's womb, which was warm, protective and provided for all the psychological, physical, and social needs. Hjelle and Ziegler (1992:191) and Meyer *et al* (1989:158) point out that according to Erikson, a general sense of trust is the cornerstone of a healthy personality, and the extent to which the child learns to trust their new environment, depends mainly on the quality of the mother-child relationship. The mother is the one who provides the physical care and nurturance continuously; she ensures that the child is fed, clothed, cleaned, et cetera.

A devoted, caring mother lays the foundation for a trusting, positive attitude in the child, towards herself and others. Children raised by this type of parent may not be inhibited in any way, and may therefore be able to form relationships very easily. They acquire

a basic sense of trust and security early in life, which enables them to explore life further and willingly embark on new experiences.

Hjelle and Ziegler (1992:192) state that Erikson attributes the first psychological crisis of one's life to the quality of maternal care. Should this be unreliable, inadequate or rejecting, it will foster in the infant a psychosocial attitude of fear, suspicion and apprehension (mistrust) towards the world in general and people in particular. Erikson feels that a sense of mistrust may be augmented when the mother turns from the baby as the primary focus of attention, to other pursuits such as resuming a career or becoming pregnant again (Hjelle & Ziegler 1992:192). Parents who are unable to assert themselves as parents due to divergent patterns of child care, who lack self-confidence and whose value systems conflict with the dominant life-style of culture, may create an atmosphere of ambiguity for the child, resulting in feelings of distrust, and therefore a poor self-concept.

According to Meyer *et al* (1989:158) the successful resolution of the crisis of trust versus mistrust will lead to the child's acquisition of a healthy trust in the world and in the self. This healthy trust is not naïve or blind, it is tempered with a degree of distrust, which leads to caution, and this is called hope.

#### **2.4.2 Autonomy versus shame and doubt (2 - 3 years)**

Keeping all factors constant, the child should by now have at least developed some sense of trust, especially towards the mother. The child will also have realised that his behaviour is his own, and that through this behaviour he can elicit certain reactions from his environment. At this stage, according to Papalia and Olds (1993:224), the child has matured physically, cognitively and emotionally and he is driven towards independence from those very people he was so dependent on from infancy. However, the child's physical, psychic and social dependence create a sense of doubt in himself as to his ability to be autonomous, and he is embarrassed and ashamed of his earlier dependence.

According to Engler (1995:161), Erikson perceives the child's experience of shame as aggression turned towards the self since he has not been allowed to exercise autonomy. This shame as experienced by the child may be intensified by parents being impatient and insisting on doing for the child what he can do for himself, or parents expecting the child to do what they are not capable of. This shame and doubt may imply that this stage may be marked by conflict between a sense of autonomy (or self-determination) and feelings of guilt and shame about their independence. The manner in which the conflict is handled by the significant others, stands between delinquency and a fully functioning person for the child. Therefore caution is necessary when dealing with children.

Papalia and Olds (1993:222) point out that when a child has reached physical maturation, he wants to do things for himself and expand his boundaries. Hamachek (1990:45) states that adults can encourage a healthy sense of autonomy through a wise balance of firmness and permissiveness which can be a yardstick against which children measure themselves. The researcher feels that firmness and permissiveness here refers to boundaries within which children should operate.

Papalia and Olds (1993:223) further assert that a balance of boundaries is necessary, as too few or too many boundaries may make children compulsive about controlling themselves. Fear of losing self-control may fill a child with inhibitions and result in loss of self-esteem. Should this happen, the child may have an improper intra-psychic dialogue and the self-concept may lose its dynamics and therefore become unrealistic (Raath & Jacobs 1993:28).

This stage is very crucial and should be preceded by a good foundation of the first stage. Hjelle and Ziegler (1992:192) postulate that children who have a *shaky* sense of trust may, during this stage of autonomy, become hesitant, fearful and insecure in asserting themselves. As adults they may manifest obsessive-compulsive behaviour to ensure control or paranoid apprehension of secret persecutors. This implies that children may fall back with regard to the development of the self-concept and when it does emerge, the self-concept may be distorted and therefore become unrealistic.

To assert the importance of this stage, Erikson (Meyer *et al* 1989:158) states:

"From a sense of self-control, without loss of self-esteem, comes lasting sense of goodwill and pride, from a sense of loss of self-control and of foreign control comes a lasting propensity for doubt and shame."

### 2.4.3 Initiative versus guilt (3 - 6 years)

During this stage, children's physical modalities have developed to such an extent that they are able to initiate movements such as running, grabbing, making noise, et cetera. The physical modalities are employed to master new tasks, to assume a certain amount of responsibility for themselves, for example, washing and dressing; and for their environment, for example, caring for pets, packing away toys, et cetera (Hjelle & Ziegler 1992:195).

Erikson calls this stage a *play stage*. In *play*, children intrude into other people's lives through movement, noise, et cetera. This makes them feel guilty. This can be seen when children play in the streets and their ball lands in the nearby yard. They will hesitate to go and collect it, and the one who finally does is usually shy and talks very softly and in an apologetic manner. Meyer *et al* (1989:159) postulate that the psychosocial crisis of this stage is that of initiative versus guilt. One can therefore say that the child now begin to realise that morality exists and it has to be obeyed.

At this stage, children are expected to do well in certain tasks. Through doing well they feel that they are someone of worth. The statement made by Hjelle and Ziegler (1992:195), *I am what I will be*, is now the statement of children's dominant sense of identity.

Children at this stage become aware of their male and female sex roles. Boys tend to be highly active and dress like their fathers and girls dress like their mothers.

Hamacheck (1990:46) maintains that children begin to develop a conscience and a sense of right and wrong. At this point one can postulate that the self-concept (an essence of being a child/educand) begins to shape up as literature indicates that when

one judges oneself according to the subjective norms of good and bad, one is actually forming a self-concept. Hamacheck (1990:470) warns that the capacity to feel guilty should not be overtaxed by moralistic and/or punitive adults, otherwise children may easily feel bad and then inhibit their healthy urges to test and expand the social world. In turn this may lead to the formation of some coping mechanisms which may lead to deviant behaviour such as juvenile delinquency. All this may imply that the self-concept formation of these children may be unrealistic and negative.

Children who experience strong feelings of guilt are usually fearful of asserting themselves, they are group dependent, rely unduly on adults and are also unable to establish and pursue tangible goals (Engler 1995:162). Erikson points out that a persistent sense of guilt can result in psychopathological behaviour including generalised passivity, sexual impotence and psychopathic acting out. When this happens, it may imply that the self-concept has lost one of its basic characteristics which is dynamism, and therefore therapy may be necessary to mend the self and all its facets in order for proper functioning to be restored.

Meyer *et al* (1989:159) point out that the ideal resolution of the crisis of this stage lies in finding a balance between the childlike enthusiasm for doing and making things, and the tendency to be too strict in self-judgement, which Erikson calls *purpose*.

#### **2.4.4 Industry versus inferiority (6 - 11 years)**

Papalia and Olds (1993:442) postulate that this stage falls within the middle childhood and is important for the development of self-esteem, positive self-image or self-evaluation, which lead to the formation of the self-concept. Children move towards this development by comparing their real selves and ideal selves and judge themselves by how well they measure up to the social standards and expectations they have taken into their self-concept. Literature point out that at this stage children ooze with the energy which they want to direct towards constructive and acceptable activities. When children receive recognition for what they do, they feel more industrious. Industriousness, as obtained through the efforts at mastery of activities, helps the child to form a positive self-concept and to believe in himself.

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In order to be industrious, the community provides opportunities for learning and co-operation. In this modern age, this is a prolonged and complex process of formal schooling directed at the acquisition of the three R's, that is, reading, writing and arithmetic. In the past, learning the skills and habits of the culture was done through observation and participating in activities (Meyer *et al* 1989:159). The inability to impress in the same way as peers (self-evaluation) may lead to a sense of incompetence (Engler:1995:163). This may automatically cause children to feel inferior and their self-image may be tainted, which will result in self-concept formation not being proper. In other circumstances children may develop some coping mechanisms such as stealing and lying.

Literature points out that a sense of inferiority may render a child unable to identify with his peers and to withdraw from the world of productivity and expertise, which may lead to greater isolation.

The above survey leads one to postulate that the crisis of this stage is the inability to acquire a sense of industry, which may lead to feelings of inferiority. Meyer *et al* (1989:159) state that it is healthy in a sense of proficiency or competence, which is one of the conditions for successfully participating in cultural processes of productivity and maintaining a family.

#### **2.4.5 Identity formation versus identity diffusion (12 - 22 years)**

This stage covers what is called the adolescence or puberty stage. At this stage, children become more conscious of their body image as several changes occur. Hamachek (1990:47) describes this stage as the one where sexual maturity is ushered in and the innocence of childhood fades into the background. According to Meyer *et al* (1989:160) children start to re-examine earlier certainties, and this evaluation is called upon at the onset of sexual maturity, in social expectations and when the adolescent has to make a career choice.

During this stage the child tries to find the *real self* and separate it from the *plastic self*. The *plastic self* refers to the self that is not stable and is easily influenced by what is happening in the environment, irrespective of whether it is beneficial or not.

As this is the time for a career choice to be made, the child should now want to put into practice the skills that he has learnt, that is being industrious as opposed to being inferior. Erikson (Papalia & Olds 1993:542) state that the main task of this stage is to resolve the conflict of identity versus identity confusion, to become a unique person with an important role in life.

The fact that children want to be unique can be equated with the quest for self-identity. Literature points out that a sense of self-identity is a prerequisite for making choices and decision making such as the choice of a career or a marriage partner. Erikson (1963:262) indicates that adolescent behaviour such as falling in love, group activities, predilict for youth movements, et cetera, are part of the youth's search for identity.

Research indicates that the elements of all the prior phases are visible in the adolescent's identity, but it should also be noted that identity is more than a fusion. It also includes the characteristics of the significant others in the children's life. For example, most children model on the behaviour of significant others such as parents, teachers, doctors, et cetera. Papalia and Olds (1993:542) indicate that the search for identity is a lifelong quest which peaks during adolescence.

Intolerance to differences, regressing to childishness in order to avoid resolving conflicts and acting impulsively are the hallmarks of this stage. Fortunately there is a grace period called *psycho-social moratorium* (Meyer 1989:159) or *time out* (Papalia & Olds 1993:542) which the society provide for children before they join the adult world. During this time they may practise adult roles and society usually remains lenient and kindly disposed to the occasional mistakes they make. Meyer *et al* (1989:160) state that society is not only tolerant to adolescent behaviour, but also provide active support in the form of institutions such as colleges, universities, technicons, traditional schools, military service and extended vocational training.



It is important to note that military service for young men is no longer compulsory in South Africa as it was for the White community during the period prior to 1994 when democracy set its foot in the country. This resulted in adolescent males being expected to enter the world of academic studies and careers earlier than before.

Traditional schooling is a practice in most African communities, where boys spend a particular period at initiation school where they are taught norms and values or even the ground motive of their culture. Circumcision is part of the *syllabus* in this school, a practice that is condemned by most *western* societies. They argue that the living conditions in these schools leave much to desire, the methods are outdated, unprofessional and unhygienic. The education offered by these schools is deemed not to be relevant to modern life any more. Calls for the closing down of these schools are being heard all over.

Do these schools still serve the purpose they were initially intended for? Of late children as young as eight years are enrolled at these schools and children of 10 years are appointed as their supervisors or *teachers* (Sowetan, 19 July 1999:3). Papalia and Olds (1993:543) assert that the fundamental 'virtue' which arises from the identity crisis is one of fidelity, which involves identifying with a set of values, an ideology, a religion or a political movement.

Hjelle and Ziegler (1992:164) state that the virtue which emerges from this stage, assist children in answering the questions *Who am I*; and *Where am I going?*. At this stage, the child has actually formed a greater percentage of his self-concept. Raath and Jacobs (1993:30) state that through involvement, experience and significance attribution we arrive at a self-concept which is *I think I am* and at an identity concept of *I know I am*.

## 2.5 MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Hamachek (1990:169) defines moral development as one's sense of ethic and knowledge of right or wrong. Van den Aardweg and van den Aardweg (1988:148) concur with Hamachek, but proceed to say that moral development is concerned with learning to distinguish between right and wrong, good or bad, and acceptable or

unacceptable behaviour within a particular society in which the child lives. Gerdes (1988:274) sees moral development as changes occurring in the individual's ethical and moral judgements with the passage of time. Cohen (1994:130) views moral development as a process through which people acquire and practice principles of right and wrong.

It goes without saying that children model the behaviour they observe. One can therefore argue that through involvement, experience and significance attribution, children interact with their environment, which brings about moral development. These children observe as others behave in a particular way, and in which way they are rewarded or punished for behaving that way. In this way children internalise that behaviour, whether good or bad. Kagan and Lamb (1987:191) state that the observation of behaviour together with the child's cognitive maturation, contributes to the emergence of the sense of morality. This implies that the environment in which children grow up is crucial with regard to moral development. Essa (1992:436) points out that children raised in an environment with clear set and enforced standards, support, nurturing and open communication in which their views are appreciated, tend to adopt a more mature set of standards.

Kagan and Lamb (1987:123) and Essa (1992:436) point out that evidence seem to indicate that the onset of the ability to distinguish between good and bad, is inborn and emerges during the child's second year.

The pluralistic nature of our society, having various cultures, leaves us in a dilemma as to the decision of what is good and what is bad. Fortunately there are universal interpersonal moral rules, for example those that prohibit crimes such as murder and theft. These laws and rules are clear and understandable to everyone. The problematic moral rules are the conventional ones, which are arrived at through general consensus, and are more culture specific (Essa 1992:436). An example of a culture specific moral rule is, in the Bapedi tribe sweeping the floor at night is taboo. If one feels compelled to sweep the floor during the night, he or she should not take the dirt outside the house.

Hamachek (1990:169) points out that morality has several components operating at varying degrees and requires at least three cognitive skills, which are:

- Learning to identify how the choices one makes can affect the welfare of others.
- Learning how to use good moral judgement, how to behave in ways that truly helps.
- Learning the appropriate skills for implementing moral judgement and behaviour.

Hamachek (1990:170) goes on to maintain that children's moral behaviour is inconsistent and this may be due to difficulties in one of the three cognitive skills involved in moral behaviour.

The three skills are:

- Lack of sensitivity to the welfare of others.
- Poor judgement on appropriate behaviour.
- Lack of knowledge on how to implement good intention.

He goes on to say that moral development relates to the child's actions, attitudes, aspirations and volition to his whole character, his virtues and at a later stage in his development to his values and judgements.

Hamachek (1990:169) and van den Aardweg and van den Aardweg (1988:148) concur that moral development is dependent on cognitive development, and the child should be exposed to the societal rules of behaviour to which its members are expected to adhere and conform to at an early age. This will ensure the safety of its members and the nurturing of healthy relationships. Epanchin and Paul (1987:62) align themselves with the view that cognition plays a role in moral development, as the advent of reasoning (cognitive) combined with varied experiences contribute to qualitative transitions in children's morality.

### 2.5.1 Factors affecting moral development

Gouws and Kruger (1994:180) identify the following factors with regard to the development of morality.

#### 2.5.1.1 *The role of cognitive development in moral behaviour*

Two prominent theorists on moral development, Piaget and Kohlberg point out that cognitive ability is important in the development of morality, as cognitive development, especially during adolescence, requires the ability to think abstractly. To emphasise the importance of cognitive ability, Gouws and Kruger (1994:180) indicate that adolescents are enabled by their cognitive development to progress from a rigid, uncompromising outlook on life to a more autonomous morality, thus becoming able to judge things more objectively. One can therefore argue that formal operational thought as in Piaget's theory, is very crucial in the development of morality.

#### 2.5.1.2 *The role of affective development in moral behaviour*

It has already been indicated that empathy and guilt feelings are the *twin devils* that pester children's affective development. Empathy refers to the ability to put oneself in someone else's situation and *feel* for that person. Through empathy, children are able to move from their egoistic state and become more altruistic. This assists children in understanding themselves and others better. Empathy therefore helps with the formation of interpersonal relationships and therefore moral development (Gouws and Kruger 1994:185).

Adolescents are able to involve themselves in self-evaluation according to the norms or standards that they set for themselves. If they realise that they transgressed a certain norm, they easily feel guilty. It therefore stands to reason that self-evaluation precede intra-psychic self-talk which is a cognitive ability. This helps with moral development and in the process shape the self-concept. This therefore implies that self-evaluation and self-talk play an important role in the formation of the self-concept and in turn, the self-concept plays an important role in self-evaluation and self-talk.

### 2.5.1.3 *The role of peers in moral behaviour*

The peer group is very important in the life of children, as every child wishes to be accepted in the peer group circle. This need for acceptance often leads children to conform in all respects to the standards and limits as set by their peer group. Gouws and Kruger (1994:186) point out that the conformity with the peer group is very strong in children from families in which parental influence has declined. In certain instances parental neglect and rejection brings about conformity.

The time spent with the peer group enables the adolescent to assume certain roles within the group. The roles which children acquire within the peer group often create conflict with the parents. Parents often feel that children do things that deviate from what they learn at home. Some parents even regard the peer group as a springboard for deviant behaviour. This is emphasised by Gouws and Kruger (1994:187) when they point out that children who surround themselves with deviant moral values may become deviant due to their environment.

### 2.5.1.4 *The role of significant others in moral behaviour*

It is an undeniable fact that children learn morality right from birth. This creates the possibility that moral learning may be irreversible. They learn and observe particular practices within their families. This is what social learning theorists call modeling (Pettigrew & Akhurst 1999:64). They learn about good or bad as defined by their families, children identify themselves with parental values and this process leads to the formation of moral values and therefore the self-concept. Therefore many researchers view the role of parents as a crucial factor in moral development.

The social group theory indicates that people are essentially conformists, therefore children accept the normative values their parents impose on them (Baron & Byrne 1991:323).

Psychoanalysts argue that the superego is the result of interaction with parents, therefore children try hard to meet parental expectations in order to avoid internal

emotional conflict (Hjelle & Ziegler 1992:50), and in this way the self-concept and morality is shaped.

The type of discipline children receive throughout their life may also assist in the development of the self-concept. Fair, firm and consistent discipline nurtures children, whilst erratic discipline may lead to the development of coping mechanisms such as lying, truancy, et cetera, as children may not be sure of what to expect when they do not act according to the norms.

#### 2.5.1.5 *The emergence of new forms of behaviour in societies*

We are currently living in a society which is undergoing rapid change. These changes in the lifestyles of people may cause changes in normative values. The transition to democracy in our country has brought about a lot of changes. At present the social fabric is very heterogeneous and values are fluid and relative. While individuals have the right to direct their behaviour, these rights may create a problem to the adolescent (Gouws & Kruger 1994:187). For example, schools no longer have the right to expel a girl from school due to pregnancy. A girl may remain at school until the delivery date and then return the following day or as soon as she is ready. This type of behaviour is observed by other children and may be modeled in future. The girl who is pregnant is herself torn between motherhood and school. She may be unable to develop a good moral code.

Children are confronted daily with economic, political, religious, educational and security problems which constitute moral dilemmas. They live with unemployed relatives, and they read in newspapers about the government wanting to retrench employees within the Public Service, as an article titled *Plans for New Look Public Service* (Mail and Guardian, 20 - 27 April 2000:8) indicates. Some of the employees affected are their relatives. One can not help but wonder what kind of self-concept and morality the youth of Zimbabwe will develop, with their president sanctioning mayhem in the country. This mayhem was vividly reported on in articles in the Sunday Times (23 April 2000:17) entitled *Bob's your bungle* and in the Mail and Guardian (7-13 April 2000:8) entitled *Mugabe turns up the*

*heat*. This may lead to despondency within the children, which in turn may have a negative effect on the development of morality.

Changes in sexual attitudes such as premarital sex; extra-marital affairs and same sex relationships place stress on children's moral development. Divorce was virtually unknown and unheard of in most African communities, but of late it has become acceptable, and it is often seen happening to individuals who keep a high profile such as a president, cabinet ministers, leaders of major political parties, et cetera. Recent reports on the possible divorce of the minister of the Rhema Bible Church seem to have dealt a huge blow to the already decaying moral fibre of our society (City Press, 23 April 2000:3 and Sunday Times, 23 April 2000:17) The corruption in which sports personalities who are hero-worshipped by youngsters are involved is a cause for serious concern as children observe this kind of behaviour and they model their lives on what they see. These activities were reported on in the Sunday Times (16 April 2000:13) in an article entitled *Playing by the bookie*, and in the Sunday World (23 April 2000:1) in an article entitled *I was told to throw a game*.

## **2.5.2 Moral development**

There are several theories on moral development, each emphasising a different aspect. The psychoanalytic theory emphasises moral feelings and emotions, the social learning theory concentrates on moral behaviour, whilst the cognitive development theory focuses on moral thinking (Louw *et al* 1998:372). Jean Piaget and Laurence Kohlberg are two cognitive psychologists who are regarded as having contributed greatly to the understanding of children's moral development, therefore this study focuses on the cognitive perspective of moral development.

### **2.5.2.1 Moral development according to Jean Piaget**

Piaget maintains that children's moral development follows a particular sequence and that there is an interaction between moral and cognitive development (Louw *et al* 1998:374). Hetherington and Parke (1993:572) state that Piaget postulates that the moral concepts of children evolve in an unvarying sequence from an early stage, which

is often called the stage of moral realism, to a more mature stage referred to as the morality of reciprocity or autonomous morality. From the statements, one can postulate that according to Piaget, morality develops in two stages, which is moral realism and morality of reciprocity.

(i) *Moral realism*

Children at a young age have little concern for, or awareness of rules and in their games, they are only satisfied with the manipulation of toys (Hetherington & Parke 1993:572). Children only become aware of rules at around the age of five, but they still regard rules as coming from the external authority. Children view parents and rules as immutable, unchanging and unquestionable. Piaget calls this *moral absolutism*. Mwamwenda (1995:149) points out that at this stage children perceive morality as externally made and imposed, whilst good behaviour conforms with the wishes of adults. At this stage children think that rules ought to be obeyed as presented and should not be modified as the most important thing is the letter of the law and not the spirit.

Mussen *et al* (1990:446) point out that, related to children's strong respect for rules and adult authority, is the moral realist's belief in imminent justice, the notion that breaking rules or disobeying authority will result in punishment. Hetherington and Parke (1993:573) indicate that children view accidents or mishaps as being controlled by inanimate objects or by God, as a form of punishment for deviating from acceptable behaviour, for example, a child who falls off his bicycle after he has told a lie, may believe that he is being punished for his behaviour.

Mwamwenda (1995:149) points out that at this stage, children judge behaviour as good or bad in terms of the consequences rather than its intention, for example a child who breaks ten dishes while trying to help the mother to set the table for lunch will see himself as naughtier than the child who breaks one glass while trying to steal sugar.



Hetherington and Parke (1993:573) postulate that children assess behaviour in terms of objective responsibility. This is due to the fact that children's moral realism is egocentric; that is, they are not able to subordinate their own experience and perceive situations as others would.

(ii) *Morality of reciprocity*

This is also referred to as autonomous morality or morality of co-operation and is attained at about the age of ten. At this stage, children's moral judgement begins to be characterised by the recognition that social rules are arbitrary agreements that can be questioned and changed (Hetherington & Parke 1993:573).

Mwamwenda (1995:149) postulates that the child becomes aware that rules are made purposely to protect the rights of individuals, rather than giving allegiance to those in authority, that is, rules are flexible and subject to change.

Children are able to consider other people's feelings and viewpoints when judging behaviour. They realise that disobedience, lying or violation of rules is sometimes justified and not all wrongdoing will inevitably be punished (Mussen *et al* 1990:447). When punishment is meted out, its reciprocity to the intentions of the wrongdoer and the nature of the transgression should be considered. The punishment should be in the form of restitution that will make up for the harm done or help teach the culprit to behave in another way, should the situation arise again. There should also be *egalitarianism* in the form of equal justice for all (Hetherington & Parke 1993:573).

Papalia and Olds (1993:401) point out that at this stage egocentrism declines and the ability to take roles and assume other persons' perspectives increases. Piaget suggests that parents can help their children achieve higher levels of moral thinking by being less authoritarian and maintaining egalitarian relationships (Mussen *et al* 1990:447).

### 2.5.2.2 *Moral development according to Kohlberg*

Kohlberg proposes that there are three levels of moral development namely; pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional levels. Each one of these levels is divided into two stages. According to Hamachek (1991:172) the first level reflects more egocentric reasoning and requires more specific or concrete thinking than the later stages.

#### (i) *Pre-conventional level*

This level covers the period spanning from four to ten years. Moral decisions are egocentric and are based on the children's personal interests (Mwamwenda 1995:150).

##### Stage 1: Punishment-obedience orientation

This stage corresponds with self-evaluation of the Relationship Theory (figure 2.3) as Mwamwenda (1995:150) states that the child at this stage uses rewards and punishments administered by adults to assess how good or bad he is. The child further perceives people as important on the basis of how useful they are to him (Mwamwenda 1995:150).

Mwamwenda (1995:150) goes on to say that children now perceive rules as being absolute and that they ought to be observed, irrespective of the circumstances. This causes children to abstain from engaging in unacceptable behaviour as they are afraid of being caught. Gerdes (1988:295) says that the child at this stage conforms to the authorities' demands because wrong doing is punished and good deeds are rewarded.

##### Stage 2: Instrumental-relativist orientation

The child views *right* as that which makes one happy, he therefore refrains from being unfair in order for others not to be unfair to him (Mwamwenda 1995:150). At

this stage, children consolidate their relationships with others in order to receive personal feedback. A child will, for example, adhere to certain rules not because he believes that rules should be obeyed, but because of the positive feedback he may expect.

(ii) *Conventional level*

Morality at this level implies compliance with the demands of society as well as the demands of significant others (Gerdes 1988:295).

Stage 3: Good boy, nice girl orientation

After the intra-psychic structure (*self*) has been established, children enter into intra-psychic dialogue which leads to involvement, significance attribution and experience, which is not based on impressing parents but on gaining approval from others (Mwamwenda 1995:151). At this time they also tend to conform to the opinion of the majority when they have to make decisions and judgements, often without questioning the majority (Mwamwenda 1995:151).

Stage 4: Law and order orientation

At this stage children recognise that the law exists, and that it should be maintained at all costs (Mwamwenda 1995:151). Children understand that the activities of society and institutions are governed by regulations, and if these are not observed and obeyed, chaos is likely to ensue, therefore a person's acceptance by society depends on his conforming with it's laws (Mwamwenda 1995:151).

(iii) *Post conventional level*

Children realise that laws are not absolute, they can be altered if they are unfair, they should involve mutual agreement and aim at protecting the rights of individuals. The society is now seen as the source of law, that is, the principle of

people shall govern the country is recognised and they are a force that can change laws if necessary.

#### Stage 5: Universal ethical principle orientation

Mwamwenda (1995:151) points out that this is a high stage of moral development, which is usually only attained by very few people. The child realises that principles are based on human life that justice is sometimes beyond established order.

Mwamwenda (1995:151) goes on to say that those operating at this stage have an abiding interest in the equality of people, the golden rule of human dignity and the universality of such principle and life is held to take precedence over all human conventions.

#### Stage 6: Morality of individual principles of conscience

Individuals who reach this stage formulate their own moral standards according to socially accepted rules and principles (Gerdes 1988:295). Hetherington and Parke (1993:576) however indicate that an individual's conscience is more important in this regard and decisions are based upon principles of justice, compassion and equality. Individuals who reach this stage are said to have highly individualistic moral beliefs which can sometimes be in conflict with the social order accepted by the majority (Hetherington & Parke 1993:576).

It is important to note that Kohlberg indicates that only 20% of the population is able to reach stages 5 and 6. Stage 6 is regarded as a theoretical ideal (Hamachek 1991:172). In support of this statement, Gerdes (1988:295) postulates that the inability to reach stages 5 and 6 may be due to lack of cognitive development on the part of individuals. One wonders if this statement is correct as there are many people with an average IQ, who have a high moral reasoning.

Siegel and Senna (1991:106) on the other hand, point out that the level of moral judgement one attains goes together with one's background. It is therefore important to

ensure that the best conditions are created for children at an early stage to ensure that their moral development is optimal.

#### 2.5.2.3 *Attainment of high moral reasoning*

According to Mwamwenda (1995:152), high moral reasoning is achieved through maturity by an awareness of cognitive dissonance. Mwamwenda further states that moral thinking can be advanced educationally, using social interaction, cognitive conflict, a positive moral atmosphere and democratic participation.

Mwamwenda (1995:152) views cognitive equilibrium as a discrepancy between the known and the unknown, and this is stimulated by challenging interactions among peers. It is further suggested that such social interactions about moral ideas and ideals enhance moral development, and through role-taking, a person learns to restructure his own moral schemata and assimilates those of others. Keasy (Mwamwenda 1995:153) also stresses that moral development during early adolescence is positively associated with the extent to which adolescents actively participate in role playing in group activities. Scharf (Mwamwenda 1995:152) concurs with Keasy regarding the importance of involvement in the formation of moral reasoning, as socially withdrawn children, according to him, do not show moral reasoning to the same extent as those who are extroverts.

Moral conflict is viewed as the most important process in effecting change in moral reasoning. Kohlberg suggests that a person should first be induced to be dissatisfied with his concept of good and bad by introducing him to a situation in which finding a solution to a moral dilemma is difficult.

The influence of other people (modeling) on moral development is advocated by Kohlberg as he observed that children in children's homes who never had normal experiences of attachment show a delay in moral development (Mwamwenda 1995:153). Institutionalisation for long periods lead to morally fixed individuals who do not progress in the same way as those who did not live in institutions.

In confirming the effects of institutionalisation, Mwamwenda points out that prisoners who evaluate their environment as authoritarian regress in moral development whereas those who regard it positively, tend to show positive moral change.

Communal living, which fosters democratic participation, enhances positive moral development as studies by Kohlberg and Bar-Yam has indicated (Mwamwenda 1995:153). This corresponds to *kgoro* (ward) in the Bapedi context where all adults living in the same *kgoro* are seen as parents by all the children in that vicinity, and no family is left without food even if the bread winner was deceased. There always is a man who will take care of that family, and the children never felt the gap left by their father. If the mother passes away, the bride's family always gives the younger sister in her place in order to take care of the children and her sister's husband. If the bride's family does not have a *replacement*, the closest next of kin according to the family hierarchy suffices. The widower always accepts her, and this is called *seantlo*. This assists in the formation of the self-concept and moral development of the children, as they feel comfortable under the care of someone they know.

It should however be indicated that of late, these cultural practices are taking place on a lower scale, especially in *urbanised areas*. These practices are left for the rural areas. Most young people, and many women whom the researcher had informal discussions with, feel that they want a husband or a fiancée of their own choice, not their elder sister's (Seekue, 2000).

#### 2.5.2.4 *Evaluation of theories on moral development*

Piaget suggests that moral development follow a fixed and invariant sequence, from moral realism to moral reciprocity. Louw *et al* (1998:81) point out that the description of developmental stages offers guidelines for the development of syllabi since cognitive skills should be developed at a particular age. The view of developmental stages also assists with the guidelines in creating a setting in which children can learn. This links well with the age requirement of seven years for enrolment at school.

In their critique on Piaget's theory, Louw *et al* (1998:82) point out that recent research has shown that children are usually more cognitively advanced in their age group than Piaget theorised.

Mussen *et al* (1990:456) argue that Kohlberg's stages are based on responses to hypothetical situations, rather than responses to issues and dilemmas which people actually confront, therefore the doubt about its meaning and the extent to which it can be generalised is expressed. Some critics believe that Kohlberg's theory is biased against women since high scores on moral maturity depend on orientation towards justice, an orientation which stresses the socialisation of males, whereas females are socialised to be nurturant, empathic and caring (Mussen *et al* 1990:456).

A further shortcoming is leveled on the methodology used by Kohlberg on the grounds that reliability and validity of measurements are low, since there is no guarantee that the participants reflected their own moral reasoning, and not responses they thought the researcher would want (Louw *et al* 1998:456).

It seems Kohlberg's theory is culturally biased in the sense that he theorises that people from relatively small, technologically unsophisticated societies seldom develop beyond stage 3 (Louw *et al* 1998:466).

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the formation of the self-concept. Special attention was paid to the concepts of the self and the self-concept. The aspects of the self were examined in detail. The components and the characteristics of the self-concept were also studied.

The psycho-social development as viewed by Erikson was also examined, and this gave an indication of how the self-concept is influenced if the crises at a particular stage is not successfully resolved.

Finally moral development was examined. Attention was paid to the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg. These theories were evaluated, where both the negative and the positive

aspects of each theory were investigated. In chapter 3 juvenile delinquency will be examined. Particular attention will be paid to the historical aspects of juvenile delinquency, and South African juvenile justice system.



## CHAPTER 3

### JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency is a complex issue for parents, educators, mental health workers, the police and even the state. Media reports of young children being involved in improper acts confront us on a daily basis. Adults observe children in the neighbourhood, carrying out what can only be called barbaric acts. Our schools are turned into battlefields where learners turn against one another and their teachers.

Juvenile delinquency is tearing the nation apart. The Saturday Star (21 July 1999:11) indicated that in one of every two school children experiment with drugs. This represents 50% of all learners. The Sowetan (8 June 1999:9) printed an article entitled *Clearing the blackboard jungle*. This article indicated that in some schools, guns and bullets are replacing pens and pencils.

One cannot help but speculate on what kind of problems we will be facing in a decade or more. In order to explore the problem of juvenile delinquency, this chapter will look into the following:

- What juvenile delinquency is
- The historical background of juvenile delinquency
- The clinical picture of a juvenile delinquent
- The prevalence of delinquency
- Who the delinquent is
- Extrinsic and intrinsic causes of delinquency
- The juvenile justice system
- Legal aspects of juvenile delinquency

### 3.2 A DESCRIPTION OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

The concept *juvenile delinquency* cannot be separated from crime, and in turn it is necessary to understand the concept of crime before one can understand the delinquency of juveniles.

The complexity of the term becomes clear when it is defined. Joseph (1995:2) asserts that the main problem associated with delinquency is defining the phenomenon, and that only a clear definition and accurate assessment will make the understanding of delinquency easy.

#### *Legal definition*

According to Lauer (1992:167), crime implies any kind of violation of a criminal law. Criminal law identifies certain behaviour as either good or bad, and therefore punishable, should the behaviour be an offence. As the law regards persons between the ages of one and eighteen years as not being able to take responsibility for their behaviour, they are not called criminals, but juvenile delinquents. Therefore an offence committed by a person who falls in this age bracket is termed juvenile delinquency.

It is clear that, amongst others, the legal definition answers questions such as who a juvenile delinquent is, and what juvenile delinquency is. It is also clear that a juvenile delinquent is someone who commits an illegal act, therefore the behaviour is in conflict with the law of the particular community.

#### *Non-legal definition*

This definition is also referred to as the behavioural definition and focuses on juveniles whose behaviour violates the law, whether or not they are officially labeled delinquents (Joseph 1995:3). Since the non-legal definition focuses on behaviour, juvenile delinquency can in this respect be seen as an asocial act, which is a threat to, and violates, basic human relationships which ensure the stability and positive functioning of the community.

The non-legal definition of juvenile delinquency is much broader, and provides a better picture. It also emphasises that a 'hidden' delinquency exists which may never come to the attention of the juvenile justice system. Literature indicates that the non-legal definition incorporates both the legal definition of delinquency, and a broad range of behaviour also known as juvenile misconduct. Juvenile misconduct refers to all deviant behaviour which is not in line with the norms of the particular community. This behaviour includes truancy, running away from home, lying, fighting, et cetera (Lauer 1992:167).

Joseph (1995:4) states that this definition explores the causes of delinquency, and may help to set up programmes for controlling and preventing delinquency. Bartol and Bartol (1989:9) warn that a distinction between a *delinquent* and a *delinquent act* should be drawn. A *delinquent act* is behaviour which violates the criminal code, whereas a *delinquent* is a label given to a youth who deviates from the prescribed norms. Several delinquent acts have to be committed before a youth can be labeled a delinquent, and minor delinquent acts should be considered *teenage pranks* or mischief, which is a part of the rites of passage into adulthood.

### 3.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Literature points out that a separate legal system for dealing with younger people never used to exist anywhere in the world. Any person who committed an offence was treated in the same manner as the next, irrespective of his or her age. Around the year 1820, an awareness among people regarding the special needs of children started, whereafter a group called Lifesavers was formed (Siegel & Senna 1997:17). This group lobbied for a separate legal status for children. Lifesavers believed that treating children in the same way as adults violates their humanitarian rights. This led to the formation of a formal juvenile justice system (Siegel & Senna 1997:17).

Trojanowicz and Morash (1992:13) point out that the juvenile justice system operated according to the *parens patriae* philosophy, where the state acts as the child's parent. Therefore a judge assumes a fatherly role in order to protect the juvenile, and see to the rehabilitation of the child. Furthermore, this philosophy was based on the belief that children who engage in delinquent behaviour were victims of improper care, custody and

treatment at home. Illegal behaviour was seen by the state as a sign that they should step in and take control of the youth, before more serious crimes were committed.

In this case, the state was to act in the best interest of the child. Under this system it was believed that the child should not be punished for his mistakes, but should be given care and custody necessary to remedy and control the wayward behaviour (Siegel & Senna 1997:18).

While countries such as the United States of America started with the implementation of a juvenile justice system around 1820, South Africa only started taking care of its youth in 1911, through the Prisons and Reformatories Act of 1911. The Child Protection Act came into being in 1913, but entrenched the differential treatment of children according to class, colour and gender (Chisolm 1990:100). Although the Act came into being, it perpetuated inequalities amongst people. Therefore, although in principle placing juveniles and adults in the same custody was to be avoided, this was not achieved.

The South African Correctional Services Act No. 8 of 1959, still emphasised this need. In 1984, a decision to centralise sentenced juvenile delinquents, due to their distinctive needs and treatment, was made. This decision gave birth to the Leeuwkop Prison for Black juvenile offenders. In this facility, juveniles were detained in separate units, which included observation units, treatment units and preparation units for release. Offenders were kept in custody according to age, prognosis and physique (Tinsley 1996:57). This system was a slight improvement as the children's needs were catered for. Children of the same age were placed together in order to minimise intimidation and children degrading each other.

The post 1994 first democratic general elections period seem to be paving the way for a new way of treating juveniles in South Africa. The first democratically elected State President Nelson Mandela called for the "...emptying of children from prisons in South Africa" in his first address to Parliament in May 1994 (Gardener, Said & Moraloiki 1996:2). This is in line with Skeeton's assumption that issues regarding child welfare seem to be highly placed on the political agenda of democratically elected governments. South Africa has now committed itself to transformation of the juvenile justice system, by ratifying the

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Skeleton 1996:180). For this commitment to be put in practice, the South African Law Commission issued a paper on juvenile justice in 1997. The paper was aimed at soliciting comments and proposals to be considered in the development of a juvenile justice system for young people under the age of 18 years (Sloth-Nielson 1997:97).

As a step towards implementing the president's call, children awaiting trial were released from prisons and placed in residential care and youth care centers in 1995. Unfortunately this effort did not run as well as expected, and lead to a crisis. Only a few places of safety existed, and these were not equipped to handle juveniles of whom some have committed serious offences. Staff in most of the facilities started industrial action and protested against their new role as *surrogate warders*, a duty they were neither prepared, nor trained for. In order to manage this crisis, the Cabinet under the leadership of the Deputy Minister of Welfare and Population Development formed an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk (IMC). This Committee comprised of the following Departments:

- Justice
- Safety and Security
- Correctional Services
- Public Works
- Education
- Health

Non Governmental Organisations formed a part of this Committee on young People at Risk. They were instructed to investigate and manage crisis caused by the removal of children from adult prisons. They were also instructed to oversee the transition and transformation of the juvenile justice system (South Africa; Department of Justice, Circular letter 14/1/3).

Despite the troubles South Africa endured with regard to juvenile delinquency, and in particular the juvenile justice system, the country today boasts with a good foundation in this area. The foundation is in the form of Correctional Services Act No. 111 of 1998

(South Africa; Government Gazette 409 (19522):26). The Act states clearly that children in custody;

- are subject to compulsory education;
- must be provided with social services, religious care, recreational programmes and psychological services; and
- remain in contact with families through additional visits and by other means.

### 3.4 CLASSIFICATION

Juvenile delinquency has always been puzzling to educators, psychologists, et cetera, which has lead to problems with the classification thereof. To this effect Epanchin and Paul (1987:267) point out that the classification of juvenile delinquency depends on the particular professional involved, that is, educators may use an educational classification, and a psychiatrist may use a psychiatric perspective.

Angent and De Man (1996:2) speak of deviant behaviour of juveniles which include activities which in terms of conventional norms and customs, are regarded as undesirable or even unacceptable.

Wicks-Nelson and Israel (1991:156) speak of conduct disorder as a persistent pattern of behaviour that violates the basic rights of others and majors age-appropriate norms.

From the above exposition, it emerges that juvenile delinquency is a conduct disorder found on Code 312.8 of the DSM VI Classification System (Frances, Pincus & First 1994:91). It should, however, be indicated that a specific code is given according to the type of the conduct disorder as follows:

*Code 312.81: Conduct disorder, childhood-onset type: onset of at least one criterion characteristic of conduct disorder prior to age 10 years.*

*Code 312.82 Conduct disorder, adolescent-onset type: absence of any criteria characteristic of conduct disorder prior to age 10 years.*

**Code 312.89**      *Conduct disorders, unspecified-onset: age of onset is not known.*

This is a psychological classification and as Epanchin and Paul (1987:266) indicated, other classifications from other professions may also be appropriate. According to the DMS VI classification system, the diagnosis of a conduct disorder should persist for a period of twelve months during which at least three of the behaviours as indicated in Appendix A have been present in the past six months (Frances *et al* 1994:80).

An educational classification, which avoids the inner life or psychiatric conditions and focuses on overt behaviour in school also exists. It has been formulated in such a way that it is easily understandable to teachers, administrators and any other people working with children. This classifies juvenile delinquents as being emotionally handicapped. Epanchin and Paul (1987:267) postulate that emotionally handicapped children had to be socially maladjusted in school, but the current definition excludes the social maladjustment, unless the child is seriously emotionally disturbed.

Bower (Epanchin & Paul 1987:267) argues that the exclusion of psychiatric conditions when classifying juvenile delinquents is a codicil which reassures traditional psychopathologists and budget personnel that "...just plain bad boys and girls, pre-delinquents and sociopaths will not skyrocket the costs of treatment".

### **3.5 CLINICAL PICTURE**

Carson and Butcher (1991:G-3) explain the clinical picture as a diagnostic picture formed by observation of the patient's behaviour.

It is believed that juvenile delinquents have serious behavioural problems in the sense that they are unable to inhibit certain behavioural impulses. They therefore exhibit asocial behaviour in the presence of, and to the harm of others. Epanchin and Paul (1987:268) and Pretorius and le Roux (1998:290) indicate that there are two categories of juvenile delinquents, namely, the asocial type and the neurotic type. There is also a sub-category called the inadequate-immature delinquent.

### 3.5.1 Categories of juvenile delinquency

#### 3.5.1.1 *Asocial type*

According to Pretorius and le Roux (1998:290) children who display this type of delinquency usually

- come from a low socio-economic background;
- tend to commit crimes in a group, that is, they are members of gangs;
- commit crimes for the fun of it, not necessarily for personal gain;
- are sociopathic, that is, their offences could rather be seen as social deviation and as a result of social weakness; and
- are not victims of a psychic disturbance, but are actualising the undesirable social values of their criminal sub-culture.

Epanchin and Paul (1987:267) identify two subcategories of the asocial type, namely the socialised-subcultural delinquent and the unsocialised-psychopathic delinquent.

#### *The socialised-sub-cultural delinquent*

These are normal youngsters who *theoretically* are socially maladjusted but not emotionally disturbed.

Wicks-Nelson and Israel (1991:177) point out that children in this group usually stay away from school and have no difficulty in relating to peers.

#### *Unsocialised-psychopathic delinquents*

This group is defiant to authority, irritable, quarrelsome and verbally aggressive. They feel persecuted, have inadequate guilt feelings and do not gain anything from being praised.



### *Quasi-socialised delinquents*

This group is identified by Pretorius and le Roux (1998:291) and is said to be less aggressive but cunning and shy. This group appears to be the most common amongst today's youth.

#### *3.5.1.2 The neurotic type*

Juvenile delinquents who fall in this category seem to have personal psychic weaknesses as a causal factor of their problems.

Pretorius and le Roux (1998:290) indicate that neurotic delinquents can be identified by, amongst others, the following symptoms:

- They come from middle and higher socio-economic environments.
- They act alone, are hypersensitive, depressed and shy; and
- they are more disposed to neurosis.

Epanchin and Paul (1987:267) point out that delinquents in this group

- usually have physical complaints;
- are less aggressive;
- seldom repeat the delinquent behaviour; and
- their delinquent behaviour is secondary to their emotional problems.

#### *3.5.1.3 The inadequate immature delinquent*

Epanchin and Paul (1987:268) point out that this category is less prominent and delinquents here exhibit the following characteristics:

- They are usually not accepted by delinquent peers.
- They have a poorly developed behavioural repertoire.
- They are relatively inadequate in their functioning.

- They are unable to cope with the demands of their environment.
- They are likely to be hyperactive.
- They have significant learning problems; and
- they function intellectually on a lower verbal level.

In conclusion, one can argue that when the the whole picture of a juvenile delinquent is studied, one senses feelings of despondency in most of the characteristics. Two questions arise:

- What role does the self-concept play in juvenile delinquency?
- How does being a delinquent influence the self-concept?

To illustrate the relevance of the self-concept in delinquency, a case study will be briefly described.

*Sebilo is an adolescent boy, who lives in Pretoria and appears to be between the ages of 16 and 19 years. Sebilo (1999) related to the researcher how he earns money as a sex worker (male prostitute). He explained that he is mostly picked up by men who feel inadequate in bed. His duty is to help their "sexually starved" wives while the husband watches or go out with his friends.*

Although one holds some reservations concerning Sebilo's explanation, he was questioned on how he feels about sleeping with a married woman, to which he responded that he does not care, as long as he earns money.

### 3.6 CHARACTERISTICS OF JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

#### 3.6.1 Low self-concept

Research indicates that there is a high correlation between delinquency and the self-concept. Juvenile delinquents have been found to have a low self-concept, low self-esteem and also lack personal identity (Rice 1992:250; Tinsley 1996:4 & Kaufman 1993:401).

Rice (1992:250) postulates that delinquency may be overcompensation for an inadequate self-concept. It is also possible that deviant patterns of behaviour are adopted in order to reduce self-rejecting feelings.

As a result of their low self-concept, juvenile delinquents find most situations threatening. In order to feel adequate, they may adopt strategies which may help them cope. Covington and Beery (Tinsley 1996:41) state that juvenile delinquents set unrealistic goals for themselves, and do not exert all the effort in order to save the little self-esteem they have.

### 3.6.2 Suicidal tendencies

Most juvenile delinquents have bottled-up anger and are depressed. According to the cognitive theory of depression, depressed people adopt negative ways of thinking and a negative view of themselves, the world and the future (Kaufman 1993:441).

Due to their poor self-concept, these children often feel that by attempting suicide, they will *punish* the person who has angered them, may it be their parents, friends or teachers. For these children no such thing as a temporary setback exists. Their self-concept loses its dynamism and remain rooted in the negative side of the pendulum, therefore suicide is seen as an immediate solution to a problem. Hafen and Frandsen (1986:106) state that these youngsters seem to form a psychological tunnel through which only the problem can be seen, and all the perspectives of life are lost.

Since juvenile delinquents view themselves as *social rejects*, they have an imperfect sense of identity; they are not sure whether they will meet the demands of adulthood and they also have a low self-efficiency (Carson & Butcher 1992:458; Neiger & Hopkins 1988:470 & Tinsley 1996:42). Henry, Stephenson, Hanson and Hargett (1993:293) argue that the affective development of a juvenile who contemplates committing suicide, lacks the strength to adapt to stress related circumstances. One can therefore infer that suicidal tendencies can also be viewed as aggression turned to the self.

### **3.6.3 Aggression and related behaviour**

The types of offences committed by juvenile delinquents indicate that aggression, violence and a lack of self-control is ever present in the life of a juvenile delinquent. These youngsters may be angry about a number of issues, such as their parents' failure to provide for them emotionally and materially. As the juvenile is unable to restrain his anger it may be turned within. The more the anger is repressed, the more anxious the child will become, which may result in depression. Depression can thus be seen as inhibited aggression. Others may express their anger overtly and violently. This can take the form of verbal aggression, that is swearing and shouting, or physical aggression which includes kicking and hitting people and objects (Hallahan & Kaufman 1988:144 and Kaufman 1993:406).

### **3.6.4 Poor social skills**

Juvenile delinquents do not easily interact with adults and adolescents outside their own group, therefore they are said to be asocial. Their communication is very erratic, at times to such an extent that they may resort to withdrawal and elective mutism. Cancliffe (Tinsley 1996:42) points out that delinquents lack the ability to take part in the type of social interaction which is beneficial to all parties involved. Tinsley (1996:42) indicates that an investigation conducted by Gaggrey and Macfall regarding skill deficits suggests that social skills and delinquency correlate.

### **3.6.5 Poor scholastic performance**

Literature state that juvenile delinquents are characterised by low levels of mental ability, particularly with regard to verbal skills as opposed to non-verbal skills (Reid 1991:144; Papalia & Olds 1993:571; Conger 1991:527 and Carson & Butcher 1992:550). Due to the low levels of giftedness, juvenile delinquents tend to repeat classes, are poorly motivated and are inclined to avoid learning situations. These children can be said to have school phobia (Conger 1991:552). They can be recognised by the following:

- Truancy
- The need to leave school at an early age
- Poor attention in class
- Underachievement
- Hypochondria
- Incomplete work or not doing their homework
- Acting out in class
- Continued attempts in distracting the attention of the other children

### 3.7 TYPES OF OFFENCES COMMITTED BY JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

#### 3.7.1 Drug usage

The use of drugs and juvenile delinquency seem to call out to each other. In fact, many children start their juvenile delinquency by experimenting with drugs. The most commonly used drug is glue. Walking down the street in a big town or city, one is bound to see a group of children, mostly boys, who are *high* on this drug. Many children request from passers by money to *buy food*, when, in actual fact, they need it to buy glue. Other drugs mostly used by juvenile delinquents are alcohol and marijuana.

According to Carson and Butcher (1992:548), the use of drugs lead to other delinquent acts like theft, prostitution and assault. Research maintains that delinquents who use drugs are forced to steal in order to maintain their habits, which can be very expensive. Female addicts may compensate stealing with prostitution in order to obtain the money used to buy drugs. It should however be indicated that the emergence of same sex relationships has plunged males into the prostitution business as well (Thabane 2000).

*Thabane (2000) is a 19 year old boy from Hammanskraal. He conducts his business around Pretoria. He says his clients are men, and that he earns between R550-00 and R750-00 during a busy weekend. However, the day the researcher met Thabane, he was very hungry and had no money to buy food. He explained that he came to Pretoria two days before, but that business was very scarce over that weekend.*

It is imperative to note that Thabane seemed to be under the influence of drugs during the interview, possibly glue or alcohol.

Juveniles interviewed gave the following reasons for using drugs:

- Curiosity: Many children want to know what a cigarette or a beer taste like. Unfortunately this does not stop at one drink or one cigarette.
- Availability: Drugs are freely available in *spaza shops*, which are easily accessible.
- Advertising: The mass media and billboards carry enticing messages, which encourage children to experiment with drugs. This, together with curiosity, encourages children to experiment with drugs.
- Conformity: Every child wants to be accepted within his or her peer group. In order to be accepted, "...you have to do what the Romans do" (Thobakgale 1999).
- Inner strength: There seems to be a belief that when one is under the influence of drugs, anything is possible. The users at first feel so good that they stop worrying about their problems. It serves as relief from tension and conflict.

Rice (1992:330) confirms most of the reasons as obtained from personal interviews by the researcher and continues as follows:

Drug usage is a means of rebellion, protest and expression of dissatisfaction with traditional norms and values. Issues such as politics and religion are vigorously discussed when the users are under the influence of drugs. Some argue that they become more creative when under the influence of drugs.

It seems that most people do not yet view smoking as being a dangerous habit. This is seen in the number of juveniles and other individuals who indulge in smoking despite the warning carried on advertisements and cigarette packets.

### **3.7.2 Vandalism**

Vandalism refers to deliberate damage or defacing of property (Kaufman 1993: 358). The underlying cause of this act is mainly the juvenile delinquent's emotional lability, boredom, anger, a destructive mood or just having fun with peers (Kaufman 1993:358 and Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1988: 238).

One can argue that the causes of vandalism can also include the delinquent's way of asserting himself and boosting his low self-concept, as explained earlier. It may also be an expression of anger against society and authority in general, and a way to relieve tension.

### **3.7.3 Theft**

This behaviour is mainly committed in order for the children to maintain themselves. Delinquents may steal money in order to buy food or even tranquilizers (Carson & Butcher 1992:546). In big cities and towns, theft includes shoplifting, pickpocketing and purse snatching. Of late cellular phones are also being snatched and sold on the streets for much less than they are worth. Carson and Butcher (1992:548) point out that juveniles sometimes steal for the fun of it. For example, they may steal a small sum of money they do not need, or steal a car and drive it a few blocks, then abandon it.

### **3.7.4 Sexual offences**

Sexual offences amongst juvenile delinquents differ according to gender. Boys mostly are involved in acts such as rape and gang rape. These activities usually involve violence and assault, where the victim is hurt.

Girls usually involve themselves in prostitution in order to earn money; drugs or any form of remuneration or gift. It is important to indicate that prostitution is not illegal per se, and that it only becomes illegal when it involves brothels, procuration and public soliciting (Snyman 1992:401).

At times male and female juvenile delinquents work together in prostitution, where the girls provide the service and the boys act as security to ensure that they do receive the money from the client. This information was given to the researcher in Sunnyside, Pretoria by Phatane (1999), an 18 year old, Grade 10 girl. She demanded R 50.00 from the researcher as compensation for the clients she may be losing during the time of the interview, and also promised more information, should the researcher pay her. While talking to the girl, a group of boys, who appeared to be in the same age group and who were standing at a distance from the researchers, came closer and demanded that she left, should there be no agreement regarding the terms.

Bartollas and Miller (1998:131) indicate that male and female gangs are not for the protection of the females per se. He argues that younger female gang members are often sexually exploited by the older male gang members.

The selling of life stories by female sex workers seem to be a norm, as the Sowetan (10 April 2000:5) reported in an article entitled *Teen sex worker has five men a night*. In the article, it was reported that Prudence, a 16 year old girl from Meadowlands in Soweto, demanded R50.00 from the Sowetan reporter for the interview. This is the fee she charges her black clients, and a further R20-00 for a photograph. Her fee for white clients is R100-00. Prudence told the Sowetan reporter that she earns more or less R500-00 a night and roughly R7000-00 per month. It should be noted that this *salary* is tax free.

Of late, it seems as though boys are also joining the sex work industry, as in the cases of Sibilo (3.5.1.3) and Thabane (3.7.1). The other factor that may lead boys into these activities is the emergence of openness about and social acceptance of same sex relationships in South Africa.



### 3.8 PREVALENCE AND INCIDENCE

It is a very seldom occurrence for one to read through the newspaper, and not come across an article which describe young people having been involved in misdemeanors. This indicates that all children exhibit undesirable behaviour at one stage or another during adolescence. The question that arises is: Can one regard such children as delinquents? Kaufman (1993:313) responds to this question with a big no, as he feels that this wayward behaviour might be that of an unmanageable child, or one who is sometimes called a *bully*.

Bartollas (1997:53) indicates that several studies have related the age of onset of delinquency, to the number of offences in subsequent years, as indicated below:

- Those who start their careers as criminals at the age of ten or earlier would be arrested an average of seven times in their life span.
- Those who start their delinquent careers at about 11 or 12 years would be arrested an average of ten times, the highest average number for any age of onset category.
- Those who start their careers at the age of thirteen, the average number of offences tended to decline nearly uniformly as their age of onset increase.

It seems difficult to place the onset of juvenile delinquency at a particular age, as various researchers do not agree in this respect. For example Comer (1995:659) indicates that conduct disorders usually begin before the age of 10, and calls this childhood-onset type, while some children show problems later. This, Comer calls *adolescent-onset type*.

Psychologists, social workers, criminologists, et cetera, agree that boys are more prone to becoming juvenile delinquents than girls. The only difference is in their view of the rate at which delinquency occurs.

Wicks-Nelson and Israel (1991:156) and Comer (1995:659) agree that boys-girls delinquency ratio is between 2:1 and 3:1 in the USA. Pretorius and le Roux (1998:289) indicate that in South Africa the boys-girls ratio of delinquency is 8:1. From the data as

indicated, it is clear that boys in South Africa are more likely to be delinquent than their counter parts in the USA. The statistics obtained from the Magisterial Court of the Department of Justice in Lebowakgomo, Northern Province, concur with the literature, as these statistics indicate a ratio of 7:1, as set out in Table 3.1. This presents a big difference between gender ratios in the USA and in South Africa. The question that arises is: Why is there a higher ratio of delinquency amongst males?

Pretorius and le Roux (1998:289) point out that boys commit more offences than girls, who usually steal money or clothes. The offences committed by boys include amongst others, vandalism, burglary, robbery, assault, car theft, et cetera. Pretorius and Le Roux (1998:289) cite the following reasons for the more prevalent delinquent behaviour for boys as compared to girls.

#### Boys

- They are physically stronger than girls.
- They look for opportunities to be adventurous and to act aggressively.

#### Girls

- They lead a more protected life.
- They mingle less with peer groups outside the home
- They do not commit crimes; but they do often accompany the boys who commit the crimes.

**Table 3.1 Juvenile delinquency statistics supplied by the Department of Justice in Lebowakgomo, Northern Province: January 1999 to January 2000**

TOTAL	SEX		AGE	
190	Male	Female	10 - 14	15 - 17
	166	24	22	168

OFFENCES						
Theft	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Assault GBH	Tresspass	Possession of dagga
29	15	7	17	44	3	5

OFFENCES						
MDP	SW	Attempted murder	Crimes injuria	Public violence	Theft from motorcars	House breaking
30	4	4	2	4	4	22

Assault GBH: Assault with grievous bodily harm

MDP: Malicious damage to property

SW: Suppression of witchcraft

Statistics show that the occurrence of juvenile offences is on the increase worldwide. This can be ascribed to the fact that juvenile offences are more reported on and communicated through the media. The researcher aligns himself with this view, keeping in mind how gangsterism in the Cape Flats was reported on, in both the electronic and print media. An incident which took the whole world by storm was the mindless slaying of teenagers at the Columbine High School in Littleton Colorado, USA. The details were broadcasted on South African national television, and made headlines in local newspapers such as the *Saturday Star* (15 May 1999:5), which printed an article entitled *Gory images warp young minds*.

The article reported on several incidents from various parts of the globe, where children as young as 14 years killed their friends and school mates. Amongst others, the following incidents were reported:

- In Kentucky High School (USA) a learner, Michael Carneal (14) gunned down three fellow learners on 1 December, 1997.
- A 15-year-old boy of Kobe, Japan, was arrested for beheading an 11-year-old boy.

The above outlines indicate that our youth is becoming more delinquent than ever before.

### **3.9 THE CAUSES OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**

The causes of juvenile delinquency are just as complex as the concept itself. Literature points out that various factors singly and at times in combination may be involved in the development of juvenile delinquency. What emerges very clear from the literature is that these factors can either be intrinsic or extrinsic (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1988:124; and Pretorius & le Roux 1998:293).

In order to outline the causes of juvenile delinquency, both intrinsic and extrinsic factors will be taken into account. It is also important to mention that these factors will be dealt with separately in this study, not because they act independently, but for smooth elucidation. In reality, these factors may act together to cause the problem under discussion.

#### **3.9.1 Intrinsic factors**

Intrinsic factors are all those aspects which are inherent in a person and which a person cannot control. These include biological and physiological factors (Carson & Butcher 1992:584; Conger 1988:526; Hallahan & Kaufman 1988:172; Rice 1992:304 and Tinsley 1996:37).

### 3.9.1.1 *Biological factors*

Carson and Butcher (1992:546) point out that genetic factors have an effect on juvenile delinquency. This postulation is based on a study done by Schulsinger (Carson & Butcher 1992:546) who found that parents, particularly fathers, of asocial children have shown sociopathic characteristics.

Brain damage and mental retardation is also thought to have some detrimental effects on behaviour, and could therefore be a source of delinquency. It is said that children who have problems with brain functioning, experience lowered inhibitory controls and a tendency towards aggressive behaviour. These children have also been found to be hyperactive, emotionally labile, unable to inhibit themselves when strongly stimulated and cannot act on the basis of previous knowledge (Carson & Butcher 1992:546; Rice 1992:307 & Tinsley 1996:37).

### 3.9.1.2 *Physiological factors*

Most delinquents seem to get involved in asocial behaviour just for the fun of it, not necessarily for personal gain. Their acts reveal impulsiveness, hyperactivity, defiance and restlessness. They also seem to be devoid of feelings. They usually do not plan their behaviour and act on the spur of the moment; for example, they may steal a car, drive it a few blocks and leave it there (Carson & Butcher 1992:548).

Carson and Butcher (1992:547) further argue that the fact that delinquents commit acts which are of no benefit to them, may imply sexual gratification due to the indoctrination that "masturbation and overt sexual release is evil and sinful".

Tinsley (1996:38) concurs with Conger (1992:527) that a lower intelligence measure is indicative of juvenile delinquency. Hogan and Quay (Tinsley 1996:38) point out that a reasonable number of delinquents have lower verbal skills as compared to performance skills, that is, non-verbal skills. One can therefore postulate that delinquent behaviour is a way of self-expression or even a defense mechanism since these children are unable to express themselves with ease.

### 3.9 2 Extrinsic factors

Extrinsic factors are external to the children. These factors are found within the child's environment, and as with intrinsic factors, the child is unable to control them. These factors include the family, school, community, peer group, media, inadequate police services and a lenient justice system.

#### 3.9.2.1 *The family*

Carson and Butcher (1992:548) point out that broken families usually breed delinquents. Broken homes here is a *catch-all* term that refers to what is commonly known as single parent families. This may be due to death, separation, divorce or the case where a parent has never been married. It is believed that children from homes where the parents are separated or divorced are more likely to become delinquents than those who lost a parent due to death.

The parent-child relationship has an enormous influence on delinquency. Some perceive parental behaviour to be an independent variable in influencing children's behaviour. Hallahan and Kaufman (1988:173) assert that parents' behaviour, as well as that of children, are reciprocal, and act in a continuum. Whilst one agrees with these scholars, one is inclined to indicate that parental influence may have much impact on the children's behaviour.

Discipline within the home should be fair, firm and consistent. If discipline is erratic and depends on circumstances, for example, when a parent does not punish a child because he or she is in a good mood at the time of the transgression, it may cause problems. Hallahan and Kaufman (1988:173) postulate that parents who are generally lax in administering discipline, hostile, rejecting, cruel and inconsistent, are likely to have aggressive, delinquent children.

Parents who are unavailable to their children for guidance cause children to depend on their own devices, and therefore to do as they wish. Shaan, an actress in an SABC television drama, shares these views. She argues that parents are usually so busy with

their own lives and work, whilst their children spend hours in front of the television watching one violent programme after the other.

A family characterised by disharmonious relations has a negative effect on a child's affective development, as the child is always unsettled and tense. This may affect the development of the self-concept. Children from these families generally fall behind in school, as they usually do not have time to do their schoolwork and may be too tired to concentrate in class. These children may resort to delinquent behaviour as a coping or defence mechanism.

Types of behaviour from disharmonious families include, amongst others, alcoholism, brutality, asocial attitudes, failure to provide, frequent and unnecessary absence from home and other behaviour that make any of the parents or both parents inadequate and unacceptable (Carson & Butcher 1992:549). As soon as a parent is acting in an unacceptable way, there is no role model or authority figure for the child, and therefore the child will do as he pleases. Delinquent behaviour may emerge among the children in such a household.

Poverty and irresponsible parenting may also lead to delinquency. Some irresponsible parents who live in one bedroom houses in squatter camps indulge in sexual activities in the presence of their children. The Saturday Star (1 November 1997:3) printed an article entitled *Basic instincts rule in youth's brutal world*. This article explains how Henry, a 9 year old boy from Khayaletsha in the Western Cape, almost raped a classmate during interval at school. Henry later reported that he sometimes wakes up during the night and sees his parents "having sex", and sometimes he observes his elder brother and his wife engaging in sexual activities. Henry merely wanted to experiment.

Large families, where the parents are unable to provide for all the children, may breed delinquency. At times the family has no food and in such cases children have to fend for themselves in whatever way they can, in order to survive. Survival in many instances may include stealing. Parents who accept stolen goods may encourage this behaviour, an act that constitutes gross irresponsibility on the part of parents. (Refer to Appendix B.)

### 3.9.2.2 *The school*

School is regarded as an extension of the family, and cause children to turn to delinquency in the same way as the family. Frustrating situations, which may confuse children, arise at school. For example, children may be separated according to race. Some of the sensitive children may cross the *barrier line* and meet their counterparts, while other equally sensitive children, who would like to keep up appearances, may start fighting with the other group. An incident such as this occurred at the Kuscke Agricultural High School in Pietersburg where Afrikaans speaking children assaulted an English-speaking learner for associating with Black learners. Booyse (1991:145-156) argues that frustrating situations at school may lead to antagonism towards the high demands or too few demands on children. Highly gifted children may get bored, underachieve and even leave school.

Literature points out that curricula are drawn for the average achiever, therefore it is inadequate and has very little scope of differentiation, to such an extent that highly gifted and below-average learners do not gain from it. This may cause frustration which may, in turn, cause children to indulge in delinquent behaviour. According to Kaufman (1993:387), children have a quest for knowledge. The breeding ground for juvenile delinquency is insufficient provision for children with regard to their abilities, and subject content that may be too abstract and not in line with the realities of daily life.

Teachers may be agents for juvenile delinquency, should they be inadequately trained, dissatisfied with working conditions and lack self-confidence. Such teachers may not be able to foster good teacher-learner relationships, and may over-emphasise academic performance, to the annoyance of learners. Any mistake made by the children, no matter how insignificant, is viewed as a challenge to their superiority (Hallahan & Kaufman 1988:175).

Another problem is inadequate or no provision of facilities at schools. Many teachers are faced with coping with a learner/ teacher ratio of 70:1. Teachers are not able to provide for the individual needs of the learners. The ratio as indicated may also create a problem of classes being too full, and there might be no space for the teacher to move around in-



between the learners. This gives rise to disciplinary problems as the learners at the back of the class know very well that the teacher can not always reach them. This may lead to what Harley, Bertram & Mattson (1999:118) call learners control over teachers. The educative process may therefore lack direction and a firm cause.

### 3.9.2.3 Community

Urbanisation and technological development are often seen as a source of moral decay, which may cause isolation. With urbanisation, *ubuntu*, which refers to people living happily as a community and sharing food and shelter, has ceased to exist.

Traditionally, all elderly people were regarded by children as parents. With many black people now living in large towns and cities, traditional practices are neglected. Children commit delinquent acts with no fear of being reprimanded or their parents finding out. Many of these children get together in shopping malls where some start experimenting with drugs and pickpocketing. These acts are however not confined to urban areas, but are starting to emerge in rural areas.

Technological development also brings about problems. Friends and relatives no longer visit each other on a regular basis, but instead use the telephone, e-mail and the internet to maintain contact. Due to this, children no longer have the opportunity to learn from each other. Many children daily spend hours in front of television sets where they often watch programmes not appropriate for them, or they use the computer to play violent and gruesome games (Saturday Star, 15 May 1999:1).

Carson and Butcher (1992:550) speak of *social rejects*. These are children who lack motivation and the ability to do well at school, as they have realised that they can not be of any use to the community, due to technological advances and the demand for occupational skills. They feel they are *being socially rejected* and they turn to delinquency.

A lack of recreational facilities often lead children to gather at shopping centres, which offers an opportunity to form gangs. These children then roam around, looking for

trouble. They become easy targets for recruitment into gangs for selling drugs (Bartollas & Miller 1998:128). In South Africa these youngsters are used for drug trafficking and car highjacking.

#### 3.9.2.4 *Peer group involvement*

The peer group offers children a sense of belonging and a means of gaining status, which is the reason why children of a particular age group always do things together. Every child in the group does his best in order to satisfy his peers and not be rejected. Thobakgale (1999) confirmed this by stating that he does not take liquor anymore, since he only used to drink in order to satisfy his friends. (Refer to Appendix C.)

#### 3.9.2.5 *Media*

It is believed that a child's behaviour is influenced by what he sees. The article "*Gory images warp young minds*" in the Saturday Star (15 May 1999:5) was accompanied by pictures of people lying in pool of blood. These people were gunned down by a 14 year old boy of Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, USA. This boy is said to have regularly surfed the internet, looking for violent and aggressive visuals. Another picture, accompanying the article, depicted a boy of more or less 10 years old concentrating on violent video games. In another article in the same newspaper, entitled *Does fantasy killing brutalise kids?* It was indicated that horror films have a detrimental effect on children's thinking.

The article *Movies featuring sex and violence are often copied* (Saturday Star, 1 November 1997:5) reported on the research carried out by Childline Family Centre in KwaZulu-Natal. The report revealed that children are influenced by the media. The subjects in the research reported that they felt their behaviour is influenced by movies. During this research it came to light that one of the children was arrested some time prior to the research for raping a friend. When he was asked, in court by a Magistrate, whether he did not realise that the girl's struggles showed that she was being terrorised, he responded by saying that in movies women always start out struggling but later give in.

Cowley, a counseling psychologist, points out that when violent games become realistic, children are not able to distinguish between fantasy and reality anymore (Saturday Star, 1 November 1997:5). As already mentioned in section 1.1, the aftermath of the television programme Yizo-Yizo, which was commissioned by the Department of Education with the aim of curbing violence in South African schools, seems to have proved that the media does influence behaviour. The following are some examples of the delinquent behaviour that took place in schools after the programme was broadcasted, as reported in two articles in Drum magazine (22 April 1999:9-11), entitled *If they can do it in Yizo-Yizo, so can we*, and *Reign of the Papa action and Chester*.

- Schools became breeding grounds for gangsters, rapists, hijackers and drug pushers.
- Teachers and headmasters were physically attacked, and beaten to the extent where some were hospitalised for weeks.
- Girls shortened their school uniforms and at times would lift their skirts for everyone to see their underwear.
- Discipline in schools deteriorated overnight.
- Learners openly expressed their sexual fantasies to their teachers.
- Graffiti and pornographic pictures appeared on classroom chalkboards and noticeboards. These included slogans such as “Yizo-Yizo, we are devils”, “We were born to kill”, “*sekunjalo*”, “Rape is fun, you are next”, and “If they do it in Yizo-Yizo, so can we”;
- School uniforms were changed and the children wore hats and tennis shoes. Items such as guns and swords were carried to school, and learners wore earrings, smoked at school and tinted their hair.

The situation in schools worsened to such an extent that the actors portraying these delinquents in the television series were forced to appeal to the youth and make it clear that what was happening on the programme was on television, and these acts were not to be imitated (Drum Magazine, 22 April 1999:12-13).

According to Dibetso (2000), an officer responsible for the restoration of the Culture of Teaching, Learning and Service (COLTS) in the Zebediela District (Northern Province),

the problem with Yizo-Yizo was with the story line. He argues that every episode should have been followed by a panel discussion, outlining what was being portrayed in the programme. This panel should consist of experts such as social workers, psychologists, educators, police officers and some of the characters.

According to Machika (2000), an education specialist, the problem lies with the *end product* of the series, as no conclusions were put forward. He proposes that every *bad* scene should have been counteracted with a scene showing the opposite behaviour. He cites as an example of a boy who raped a fellow learner. According to him, this boy should have been suspended from school and arrested. Machika (2000) argues that it would have indicated to the children that crime does not pay.

Mphahlele, Sekole and Leopeng (2000) who are curriculum advisors in the Department of Education feel that viewers should have been informed about the aims and contents of Yizo-Yizo prior to its broadcasting. In this way children would have viewed the drama with the aim of learning, and parents would have had the opportunity to guide their children.

As indicated earlier, delinquent children seem to have low cognitive abilities and a low self-concept. The researcher is of the opinion that most of the children who carried out violent acts at schools in the name of Yizo-Yizo, might have failed to differentiate between the drama and the reality. Due to their low self-concept, they might have found role models in the drama to identify with. Similarly, the drama might have provided a springboard for coping mechanisms of rebelling against authority, in this case the school. This may be emanating from their self-talk which seem to be negative in most cases.

Whatever the real reasons for the violence breaking out in schools after the broadcast of Yizo-Yizo might have been, it is clear that the media, especially television, influences behaviour. We prove this every day by buying a certain brand of a product, after it was advertised on television, radio, billboards, newspapers, et cetera.

### 3.9.2.6 *Inadequate police protection and a too lenient justice system*

A lot of people in South Africa believe that the justice system in our country is completely inadequate, for it recognises the rights of an offender, while the rights of the offended is ignored. This is confirmed by an article printed in the Sunday Times Metro (22 August 1999:5). The article, *Rapist gets help but child victim is ignored*, reported on a child who was raped, but received no counseling for two weeks, while her attacker was receiving daily psychiatric treatment.

Drum Magazine (18 February 1999:14-15) paints another shocking picture regarding the loopholes in the justice system. The magazine reported on how members of it's staff were able to gain entry into a Pretoria prison within 15 minutes. They were invited by an inmate to prove to them that corruption is high within the prison, and that drugs are also sold inside. Once inside, the transaction was so easily completed, that one reporter was quoted as saying it went so well, it was as if "...we'd been buying popcorn from a street hawker". No body search was done or identity documents requested. The most shocking part was the sign at the entrance of the prison, which reads "BEWARE OF PICKPOCKETS".

It came to light that drugs are brought into the prison by corrupt warders, and then distributed to certain prisoners who work as *dealers*. These *dealers* usually work in the kitchen, transport division, boiler room or as cleaners. Some of these corrupt warders working at Leeuwkop and Pretoria Prisons, receive money and liquor as bribes from prisoners. These prisoners are in turn allowed to leave the prison over weekends, or prison records are altered in order to speed up their release (Sunday Times, 23 April 2000:1).

The stamping out of corruption in prisons and the whole Department of Correctional Services was the top priority of the first Director General, who took office after the 1994 democratic elections (Sithole 1997:1). Unfortunately corruption within the Department of the Correctional Services itself seemed to be at the order of the day. The Director General himself later left the Department a disgraced man, due to various allegations of corruption including fraud, nepotism and sexual abuse (Sunday Times, 12 September

1999:1; Sunday Times, 5 March 2000:1 & 13; City Press, 5 March 2000:1). The sign outside the prison stating "beware of pickpockets" seems to have proved itself true within our justice system.

During the June 1999 elections, many political organisations used crime as a point of departure for campaigning and gaining support. The Pan Africanist Congress called for what the media called *Stanley's Butchery* - cutting of certain body parts from criminals. The United Democratic Movement promised to employ and deploy more police in the streets if elected. However McMahon, Zimmer, Modglin and O'Neil (1988:5) do not believe that employing more police will reduce crime, but that it may just reduce the fear of crime. The DP (Democratic Party) said it has the guts to fight back against crime.

The inability of the police and the justice system to control crime led to the formation of groups such as PAGAD (People Against Drugs) in the Western Cape and Mapogo-a-Mathamaga in the Northern Province. Mapogo-a-Mathamaga is a group of business people who organised themselves to fight crime against their businesses. Later this organisation opened its membership to everyone who feels threatened, that is, they also protect the properties of anybody who joins them. Mapogo-a-Mathamaga worked together with the police, until their leader joined the UDM towards the elections in June 1999. This group is still functional and extending to other provinces, as was reported in the Pretoria Weekend News (10 July 1999:1). Mapogo-a-Mathamaga vowed to embark on Operation Y2K in Pretoria prior to the Christmas period of 1999. This operation aimed at ensuring that all sex workers were removed from the streets in Pretoria, and handed over to the police.

This group believe in corporal punishment and their slogan is "O BONE KAE LEHODU LA DITOKELO" (Where have you seen a thief/ criminal with rights?). The leader of Mapogo-a-Mathamaga points out that people have confidence in them, and criminals know that "if they cross us we will work on their buttocks" (Weekend Pretoria News, 10 July 1999:9 and Sunday World, 11 July 1999:16).

All of the examples mentioned above point to the fact that our justice system is seriously lacking. It is hoped though, that the pronouncements of the New National Minister of Safety and Security that *criminals will be dealt with like a bull dog deals with a bone* will carry water (Weekend Pretoria News, 10 July 1999:10 and Sunday World, 11 July 1999:16).

With the formation of the elite police unit, *The Scorpions*, the hope was expressed that all corrupt officials within the Police services would be rooted out and the justice system would improve. Unfortunately this seem not to be achieved, as the Scorpions, the regular police officers as well as the officers in the Department of Justice are at loggerheads over rules, responsibilities and procedures as reported in the Sunday Times (23 April 2000:2), in an article entitled *Scorpions feel the sting of angry justice officials*.

### 3.10 THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA

Since the call for the *emptying of children from prisons in South Africa* by the first democratically elected State President Nelson Mandela in his first address to Parliament in May 1994, justice workers have worked around the clock to ensure that this call is implemented. This implementation, which took place in May 1995, did not proceed without problems, as there was no system in place for the supervision of these youths after their release. The main outcry was due to the serious nature of the crimes for which some of the juveniles were arrested, and the threat they were seen to pose to the community (Podblieski & O'Brien 1996:179).

Due to the public outcry and the obvious problems posed by the juveniles, an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Youth at Risk was formed in July 1996. The brief of the committee was amongst others to check on children in prisons, examine charge sheets at courts and inspect police cells, in order to check whether there is compliance to the new law (Sloth-Nielson 1996:343).

The stipulations of the new juvenile justice system in South Africa will now be discussed.

### **3.10.1 Arrest**

Police officers who arrest young offenders are expected to caution offenders, take them home and caution them in the presence of their parents, or take them home with a notice to appear at a reception and referral process. If their home cannot be found, arrangements must be made for the child to be held in a place of safety until their home or next of kin is found (Pinnock 1994:343).

The above expectation from the police imply that no child should be held in prison, police cells or lock-up whilst awaiting trial. Where it is necessary to detain a juvenile, the period of detention should not exceed 48 hours (Sloth-Nielson 1996:61).

### **3.10.2 Reception and referral**

A police officer who has arrested a juvenile, should call in the assistance of a youth justice worker, whose role is, together with the community family finder, to call a reception process where the parents or the guardian, the police officer (or the arrest report) and the offender have to be present. This meeting will decide whether the offender is to be released with no further action, be sent back to the police for formal caution or be charged and referred to a prosecuting authority (Pinnock 1994:342).

### **3.10.3 Family conference**

This conference is convened by the youth justice worker within 21 days. The offender, his parents, the arrest report, the victim or his representative should be present. Decisions are taken on consensus and should be agreed upon by the offender. If a consensus cannot be reached, if the juvenile does not acknowledge responsibility, or if it is felt that the matter can be dealt with in another way, the matter is referred to the prosecutor for consideration of the charges (Pinnock 1994:343).



#### **3.10.4 Juvenile court**

It should be noted that South Africa does not have juvenile courts. Courts for adults are turned into juvenile courts and cases are held in camera (Pinnock 1994:344). Jazbhay (1998:42) points out that young offenders are entitled to a speedy trial and that their parents or guardian should accompany them to court if they are under the age of 18.

#### **3.10.5 Sentencing**

Pinnock (1994:344) points out that sentencing should attempt to restore the harmony between the offender and society, as well as family preservation. The court may refer the case back to the family conference in order to provide recommendations for culturally-appropriate sentencing, which may include restitution, rendering the aggrieved person some benefit, community service, et cetera. The researcher is of the opinion that this is an attempt at mending the 'self' and all its facets, and it thereby encourages a positive self-concept and self-actualisation.

#### **3.10.6 Post sentencing period**

It should be noted that the detention of juveniles is totally unacceptable in South Africa, unless the circumstances are very extreme. Sentenced children should be kept in places of safety or care units. Young offenders can only be kept in custody, under what is called *emergency detention*, for a period of 48 hours provided they are between the ages of 14 and 18 years (Sloth-Nielson 1996:18).

Cases which may warrant full detention instead of emergency detention, are those where the juvenile might disappear or interfere with witnesses.

#### **3.10.7 From first court appearance onwards**

This is applicable to older offenders after the first court appearance. In this case, according to Sloth-Nielson (1995:52) *remands in custody* implies *remands in places of*

*safety*, but such a juvenile may be held in prison, police cells or lock-up for a period not exceeding 48 hours under the following conditions:

- The older juvenile must have committed a schedule 2 offence (see 3.11).
- The court ordered detention pending the next court appearance.
- The court must be *satisfied* on the basis of evidence given that admission to a place of safety cannot immediately take place.

### 3.11 REDEFINITION OF JUVENILE OFFENCES

#### Schedule two offences

Due to juveniles being detained for *trivial* offences in the past, the new Correctional Services Act has come up with a list of what it called schedule 2 offences, which include murder, rape, robbery, assault when a dangerous wound is inflicted, kidnapping, arson, breaking or entering any premises with intent to commit an offence, et cetera (Sloth-Nielson 1995:55).

A juvenile who commits these offences may be held in prison, police cells or lock-up for a period not exceeding 48 hours (see 3.10.7).

### 3.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter focussed on juvenile delinquency. The definition of the concept delinquency was given and described from both the social and legal perspectives.

The characteristics of juvenile delinquents were looked into. It was interesting to note that, amongst other characteristics, juvenile delinquents tend to show a low self-concept (Rice 1992:250) and low levels of cognitive ability (Papalia & Olds 1993:571).

The question of the self-concept and juvenile delinquency came up when the clinical picture and the causes of juvenile delinquency were investigated. Classification of juvenile delinquents was studied according to the DSM IV classification system.

The types of offences committed by juvenile delinquents were also studied.

The juvenile justice system in South Africa was brought under the spotlight. This took us through the procedures from the moment when a juvenile is arrested to the passing of judgement and the period after the sentencing. It was interesting to learn that the new juvenile justice system has outlawed the detaining of children in police cells or prison, and that a juvenile should be tried within 48 hours of arrest (Sloth-Nielson 1996:61).

The re-definition of juvenile offences were studied.

In chapter 4 the research design, methodology and the media chosen for the empirical research will be outlined.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the self-concept formation of juvenile delinquents. The previous two chapters mainly focussed on the theoretical aspects of the self-concept and juvenile delinquency.

Chapter 2 looked into self-concept formation, psycho-social development and moral development of children. In chapter 3 the meaning and history of delinquency, the types of offences committed in South Africa as well as the causes of juvenile delinquency were investigated. The current juvenile justice system in South Africa was also looked at.

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology. The manner in which the sample will be compiled and the various media to be used in the investigation will be outlined. The concepts which form the base for the choice of some of the media will be discussed.

#### **4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The aim of this study is to investigate the formation of the self-concept of juvenile delinquents. The driving force behind the behaviour of delinquents, the way juvenile delinquents evaluate themselves; how they feel after they have committed the delinquent acts and how it influences their future behaviour will be investigated.

The first step towards the goal is to ascertain the level of the self-concept of juvenile delinquents. The general self-concept score of a group of juvenile delinquents will be determined. In order to compare the general self-concept of juvenile delinquents with that of non-delinquents, the general self-concept score of non-delinquents will also be determined.

The second step towards the goal of the research is to determine what drives the behaviour of the juvenile delinquents and how they feel about themselves after committing the acts. An in-depth study on one member from the group of juvenile delinquents will be done.

In addition to the quantitative study as outlined above, the in-depth study will serve as a qualitative aspect of the research and also give a clearer picture on the influence of unacceptable behaviour on the self-concept and vice versa.

### **4.3 SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE GROUP**

As this is an investigation of a limited scope, it was decided that only a small number of adolescents will be used. Twenty adolescents will be selected to form the first group. Ten of these adolescents will fit the criteria for the non-legal definition of juvenile delinquents, that is, social delinquents; whilst another group of ten (10) adolescents will fit the criteria for a legal definition of juvenile delinquents.

As a control group, 20 non-delinquent adolescents will be selected. Ultimately, the nomothetic research will involve a total of forty adolescents.

It should be indicated that all the adolescents who will be involved in this study, come from more or less the same historical and cultural background. They will also be in more or less the same age group, that is in the age range from 16 to 19 years. Their educational level will be in the Further Education and Training (FET) leg as defined by Outcomes Based Education and Training (OBET). FET refers to Grades 10, 11 and 12.

To eliminate the gender variable in this study, the sample will be composed of boys only.

Finally, one member from the juvenile delinquents group will be selected for the purpose of the in-depth study.

#### **4.4 MEDIA CHOSEN FOR THE RESEARCH**

For the purpose of this study, Vrey's Adolescent Self-concept Scale will be administered to all adolescents involved in this research.

For the in-depth study, the interview as well as the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) will be administered to one member from the group of juvenile delinquents.

A brief discussion of the media to be used in this study follows.

##### **4.4.1 The self-concept**

###### **4.4.1.1 *The Adolescent Self-concept Scale (ASCS)***

The ASCS was designed by Vrey and Venter (1983) for the purpose of gaining more knowledge regarding people's self-concept. The ASCS presupposes that people should be familiar with both their physical and psychological abilities and powers.

The self-concept is therefore a very important factor, both in a person's psychological existence with and in co-existence with others. The self-concept is a frame of reference for a person, and therefore forms the basis for evaluation and methods of associating with others. It also underlines the attitudes towards stable patterns of action and behaviour.

The self-concept is a yardstick used either consciously or unconsciously in self-perception, psychological experiences and in the formation of relationships, therefore the self-concept co-determines the quality of relationships.

The self-concept also pre-supposes that the self is consciously understood by everyone. What a person is or can be made aware of, is viewed as the dimensions of the self-concept. The dimensions of the self-concept then form the structure of the self-concept.

The structure of the self-concept is made up of the following constructs or dimensions:

- The physical self: The self in relation to one's physical aspects

This dimension indicates whether a person accepts himself or not, or whether he or she despises him- or herself on the basis of physical appearance.

A person with a positive self-concept is able to take care of his or her body, is always neat and feels attractive. Such a person is satisfied with his or her weight, height, et cetera.

- The personal self: The self in relation to the psychological aspects

Children who accept their physical attributes feel adequate, cheerful, calm and do not feel inferior to others. They are assertive and are firm regarding decisions made. They are satisfied with their achievements and would like to preserve their self-image.

- The family self: The self in relation to the family

Individuals with a positive self-concept have good relationships with their families. They are usually happy as they know that their family holds them in high esteem. They feel accepted by their families and know they have their families' support. When such children mature, they are able to move away from their family without fearing rejection. They know that their family approves of their behaviour.

- The social self: The self in relation to the community

The development of the social self starts at home, proceeds to school and finally to the broader community.

Children with a positive self-concept are friendly to others, they make friends easily and are popular amongst their peers. They are rarely reserved or self-conscious, and they are helpful. Children with a positive self-concept are able to forgive others and have the ability to recognise good qualities in others.

- The moral self

Values such as love, honesty, faithfulness, respect, et cetera, are characteristics of people with a positive self-concept in this dimension. Being able to distinguish between right and wrong or good and bad implies identification with the community. People who identify with the morals of their communities are able to evaluate themselves, and therefore stop any kind of action they may regard as bad or wrong.

- Self-criticism

This dimension can be viewed as an offshoot of the the moral self dimension. The ability to evaluate oneself and respond positively to the aspect being evaluated, implies a positive self-concept. For example, if one realises that he or she does not obey traffic signals while driving, but then start to obey them, it implies a positive self-concept in that other road users and even the self will not be harmed.

#### 4.4.1.2 *Administering the ASCS*

The testee should have a pencil, an eraser and the test booklet. The questions are answered in the test booklet by making a clearly legible cross over the responses which he or she feels is suitable. Two possible answers are given, that is, A and B. There is no time limit, but the respondents should work fast. It is also important to indicate to the respondents that there are no right or wrong answers, and that they should respond as they feel.

#### 4.4.1.3 *Norms for the ASCS*

Norms are objective standards based on the scores obtained by the respondents. The distribution of the scores is usually negatively skewed, and to normalise the scores, the raw scores are converted into stanines as indicated in Table 4.1 (Vrey & Venter 1983:18). Stanines are scores ranging from 1 to 9.



**Table 4.1: The self-concept stanine scores**

RAW SCORES	STANINES	INTERPRETATION
38 - 50	1	Low self-concept
51 - 57	2	
58 - 63	3	
64 - 69	4	Medium self-concept
70 - 74	5	
75 - 78	6	
79 - 82	7	High self-concept
83 - 85	8	
86 - 92	9	

The general self-concept scale has a mean of 5 and a standard deviation of 1,96.

#### **4.4.2 In-depth study**

For the purpose of the in-depth study, one respondent from the group of juvenile delinquents will be selected and exposed to various media that can reveal personality characteristics. This will serve as the qualitative part of the research. The following media will be used:

##### **4.4.2.1 The interview**

One may argue that to the *uninitiated* or the ordinary person, interviewing is the same as a conversation. In actual fact, interviewing is more than talking. Burger (1996:1) points out that an interview is a therapeutic technique, and it's effective or ineffective use determines the therapeutic process.

In order for an effective interview to be conducted, there should be an atmosphere of mutual trust between the client and the interviewer. In this situation, the client should experience love, respect, care, trust, honesty and acceptance so that he or she can feel

free to express his or her thoughts, feelings and attitudes, without fear of being judged or ridiculed. To this effect Ivey, Ivey and Simek-Morgan (1993:21) postulate that the interviewer should be able to *walk in the client's moccasins*. This implies that the interviewer should be empathic. However, these authors further warn that interviewers should remain separate, true to themselves and to their own beliefs.

One very important aspect in an interview is the knowledge and good usage of interviewing techniques by the interviewer. It is always best for the interviewer to operate from the *external frame of reference* as opposed to the *internal frame of reference*.

The *external frame of reference* implies a situation where the client takes the lead in presenting and unfolding the problem, with the interviewer only helping the client to continue exploring and going deeper into the problem. The interviewer conducts the interview with an open mind. This implies that the interviewer comes into the interview situation with no pre-conceived ideas. This then calls for the interviewer to demonstrate his or her knowledge of interviewing techniques like paraphrasing, reflection on content and feelings, confronting where necessary, et cetera. Operating from an external frame of reference helps the interviewer not to judge, advise or lecture the client.

For the purpose of this study, a semi-structured interview will be used as specific information is sought. This does not mean that the interviewer should lose the aspects of the interview as outlined by Brammer, Abrego and Shostrom (1993:83-86) and Burger (1996:23). These aspects are briefly discussed below.

#### – *Uniqueness/ Commonality*

It refers to the ability to recognise that every client is unique and comes with his or her own personal characteristics, background and challenges.

It should also be noted that every interviewing relationship is unique and different from the previous one. The interviewer's objectivity as well as emotional involvement is important.

- *Objectivity/ Subjectivity*

It is very important to respect the client's views. Therapists should not force their views on clients. Subjectivity, amongst others, includes emotional warmth, psychological closeness and intense interest in the client.

- *Cognitivity/ Affectiveness*

The interviewer should be sensitive as to when to encourage discussion of a problem and when to encourage exploration of feelings and emotions.

- *Ambiguity/ Clarity*

The interview situation may be overwhelming and confusing to the client. It is the interviewer's duty to explain the process and clarify the relationship, however, ambiguity is necessary at times, since people tend to treat ambiguous situations in their own unique way and therefore project their inner feelings. The therapist should therefore use ambiguity if it may serve as a projective technique.

- *Responsibility/ Accountability*

The client has the responsibility of disclosing his or her problems. The interviewer's responsibility is towards guiding the client to find a solution to the problem and the outcome of the interview.

- *Trust/ Distrust*

Help from a person who can be trusted is gladly accepted, whilst distrust leads to rejection. The interviewer should ensure that his or her efforts to build a trustful relationship in the interview relationship are not viewed as a ploy to manipulate, control or punish the client.

In this semi-structured interview, the interviewer will, amongst others, gather information regarding the following aspects:

- Biographical data such as language, age, sex, et cetera.
- Family background, for example, the people who live with the client and the way they interact with each other.
- Academic background, for example, class, attitudes towards school, teachers, study, et cetera.
- Traumatic experiences.
- Future plans.
- How the client feels about himself and how that influences his behaviour.
- General information

#### 4.4.2.2 *Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)*

This is a projective technique designed for use with people older than ten (10) years of age. It has been designed to investigate the dynamics of personality as manifested in interpersonal relations, and in the apperception or meaningful interpretation of the environment. The proponents of the TAT argue that it is more unstructured and offers a more ambiguous stimulus, which helps individuals to express their deepest inner subconscious wishes, needs, desires, anxieties, basic fears, insecurities and defense mechanisms. It also offers coping mechanisms employed to deal with these fears, anxieties and insecurities (Bellak & Abrams 1997:152).

The TAT is a semi-structured media, in the sense that the person has to tell what he sees in a picture, but unstructured in the way that a variety of responses can be obtained.

The rationale behind choosing this medium is wanting the individual to offer his own perception. The way something is viewed by a person, offers information regarding his unique perception and attribution of meaning, therefore the task requires active involvement and spontaneous reaction.

Since the TAT is a projective technique in which an individual expresses his or her own feelings, it is imperative that a distinction between projection and expression is made.

### *Projection*

Psychoanalytic theorists, in particular Freud, view projection as a defense mechanism used by individuals to protect the self (ego) when it is being threatened. During projection the individual's unacceptable subjective traits, emotions, dispositions and drives are ascribed to someone or something in the environment. In this way individuals are able to justify themselves in their own eyes (Reber 1985:540).

It seems the projection process is accompanied by *denial* that unacceptable feelings and tendencies do exist. This denial assists in protecting the self against conscious awareness of the undesirable situation and the anxiety which the situation provokes. Denial is achieved through repression (Meyer *et al* 1997:70).

One can therefore view projection as supplementary to existence as individuals unconsciously ascribe their feelings and motives to others as if the self or the 'I' is being duplicated. Projection can also be viewed as complementary to existence as people at times consciously do things they know to be against the norms and values of their group, but they do these things as long as the self is protected. For example, most delinquents report that they know that they should not vandalise property, steal or use drugs, but they still do it. It seems as if such people view the world through coloured glasses and would like to create their own world.

### *Expression*

The manner in which an individual behaves may be called *expression*. Expression can therefore be indicated through people's attitudes, for example when they are anxious, depressed, happy, et cetera, and gestures such as facial expressions and motor movements.

Expression can be consciously or unconsciously executed and can also be seen as communicative in nature, that is, through expression people are able to communicate.

From the above exposition, one can conclude that expression and projection are complementary and supplementary to each other. It should however be noted that all projection is expression, but not all expression is projection.

(i) *Administering the TAT*

In administering the TAT, Bellak and Abram (1997:540) stress the importance of a good noncommittal rapport between the tester and the test taker.

The process of administering the test involves the test taker being told to formulate a story about each picture being presented. The test taker should describe the events in the picture at that moment, what the characters are feeling and thinking and what the outcome could be. The tester may also enquire after some of the test taker's responses in order to get clarification and also to investigate deeper emotions within the test taker.

The TAT consists of thirty-one cards with black and white pictures, devised by Morgan and Murray. For the purpose of this study, the following six cards will be used:

1, 2, 3BM, 6BM, 13B and Blank

A description of the stimulus value of the cards to be used will now be given:

*CARD 1*

This card gives an indication of an individual's global personality, the relationship towards the parental figures as well as the need for achievement. Symbolic sexual responses are said to be indicated by the strings of the violin and the play with the fiddle. The breaking of the violin may indicate the undertones of aggression,

depression and distancing of oneself from the world. The self-concept of an individual may also be captured in this card.

#### *CARD 2*

This card gives an indication of interpersonal relationships, particularly in the family structure. Oedipal themes, compulsive tendencies and sibling rivalry are said to come out through this card. Academic problems can be projected through the books that the girl in the foreground holds. Since this card deals mainly with interpersonal relationships and the family situation, aspects of the self-concept always emerge.

#### *CARD 3BM*

This card may be described as asexual since it may be used with both sexes. The card indicates typical reaction to frustration and aggression. With aggression, it further indicates whether it is intra-aggression, or aggression towards the environment. Indications of depression can be obtained through this card. Denial and distancing tendencies are also evident from this card.

#### *CARD 6BM*

This card gives indications of the mother and son relationship. The manner in which this relationship is handled also indicates the client's relation with females in general. Oedipal themes as well as aggression do come out through this card.

#### *CARD 13B*

This card gives information about the self-concept, feelings of insecurity, despondency and rejection.

### *BLANK CARD*

This card gives an indication of the creativity of the test-taker. Involvement, experience and meaning attribution can also be captured through this card since the test-taker formulates a story on a clean sheet. As there is no structure to make inferences from, this probably implies projection and expression. Aspects of the test-taker's personality and of the self-concept can be captured by using this card.

#### *(ii) Norms for the TAT*

Anastasi (1988:614) points out that the conspicuous deficiency common to many projective instruments pertains to the normative data. She goes on to indicate that the norms are either completely lacking, grossly inadequate or vague. The TAT is no exception to other projective instruments, therefore it does not have any standardised norms for interpretation.

In interpreting the TAT, the therapist forms hypotheses. An interview with the client should always follow in order to obtain further information and to clarify certain aspects.

## **4.5 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the research design was outlined. The selection of the sample group was discussed and the various media to be used in the research were discussed.

In chapter 5 the data gained from the empirical research will be discussed.



## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the research design as well as the research methodology were discussed. The selection of the sample group and the media for the research were explained. The following media were selected for the empirical research: The Adolescent Self-concept Scale (ASCS), the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and the interview.

This chapter will focus on the discussion of the results as obtained from the empirical research.

#### 5.2 THE ADOLESCENT SELF-CONCEPT SCALE (ASCS)

The Adolescent Self-concept Scale was administered to 40 adolescents. The experimental group consisted of 10 legal delinquents and 10 social delinquents. The control group consisted of 20 non-delinquents.

Quantitative interpretation of the self-concept scores

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide the following information respectively:

- The individual sub-total scores of every respondent on each dimension
- The general score for each respondent
- The average stanine for every respondent
- The total score for each group on each dimension
- The average raw scores for each group on each dimension
- The total general self-concept score for each group
- The average general self-concept score for each group.
- The average stanine for each group, which constitutes the general self-concept score.

**Table 5.1: Quantitative interpretation of the self-concept scores of individual respondents for the non-delinquent group**

	DIMENSIONS OF THE SELF-CONCEPT						General self-concept scores	Stanine for each respondent
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI		
Respondents	Physical self	Personal self	Family self	Social self	Moral self	Self-criticism		
1	12	13	15	10	11	6	67	4
2	16	11	15	11	12	5	70	5
3	11	10	10	11	10	5	57	2
4	11	9	13	14	11	4	62	3
5	16	8	13	11	13	3	64	4
6	9	9	17	12	10	6	63	3
7	12	10	12	12	10	4	60	3
8	11	13	15	9	13	5	66	4
9	10	14	12	11	13	4	64	4
10	13	16	14	13	14	3	73	5
11	15	10	13	12	10	5	65	4
12	14	11	16	14	13	8	76	6
13	11	7	12	11	12	7	60	3
14	10	12	14	8	7	5	56	2
15	11	11	12	10	10	6	69	4
16	11	13	17	12	12	4	62	3
17	11	12	13	12	9	5	60	3
18	10	7	13	10	9	5	54	2
19	13	14	17	15	10	4	73	5
20	11	12	13	12	15	4	67	4
Total of dimensions	239	222	276	230	224	98	1288	Average Stanine for group: 3.65
Average raw scores	11,95	11,1	13,8	11,5	11,2	4,9	64,4	

To obtain the average self-concept score of this group, the general self-concept scores of all respondents are summed. The total is divided by the number of respondents. The average self-concept score of the group will then be converted to a stanine, which will constitute an average stanine for the group. The calculation will be done as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Average self-concept score of the} \\ \text{non-delinquent group} &= \frac{X}{N} \\ &= \frac{1288}{20} \\ &= 64,4 \end{aligned}$$

Where X represents the sum of the average self-concept scores of all respondents, and N represents the total number of respondents:

According to Vrey and Venter (1983:18), a raw score of 64 is comparable with a stanine of 4, which indicates a medium self-concept. This indicates that the average general self-concept scores of the non-delinquent group falls in the medium self-concept category.

**Table 5.2: Quantitative interpretation of the self-concept scores of individual respondents in the delinquent group.**

	DIMENSIONS OF THE SELF-CONCEPT						General self-concept scores	Stanine for each respondent
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI		
Respondents	Physical self	Personal self	Family self	Social self	Moral self	Self-criticism		
1	12	11	12	16	7	4	62	3
2	7	6	10	13	10	4	50	1
3	12	7	7	14	10	4	54	2
4	5	8	10	8	8	5	44	1
5	12	11	14	8	11	7	63	3
6	10	8	11	11	13	4	57	3
7	9	10	8	11	9	6	53	2
8	13	10	5	9	8	4	49	1
9	15	8	10	10	9	5	57	2
10	11	9	13	12	10	2	57	2
11	10	9	11	11	11	6	58	3
12	9	8	12	8	13	5	55	2
13	13	10	14	10	10	5	62	3
14	9	10	7	10	5	6	47	1
15	16	11	15	14	12	5	73	5
16	14	12	12	10	9	5	62	3
17	11	12	15	9	9	5	61	3
18	6	5	12	6	8	3	40	1
19	10	8	9	9	9	6	51	2
20	13	14	14	12	12	6	71	5
Total of dimensions	217	187	221	211	193	97	1126	Average stanine for group: 2,4
Average raw scores	10,85	9,35	11,05	10,55	9,65	4,85	56,3	

To obtain the average self-concept score of each group, the general self-concept scores of all respondents are summed. The total is divided by the number of respondents. The average self-concept score of the group will then be converted to a stanine, which will constitute an average stanine for the group. The calculation will be done as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Average self-concept score of the} \\
 \text{delinquent group} &= \frac{X}{N} \\
 &= \frac{1126}{20} \\
 &= 56,3
 \end{aligned}$$

Where X represents the sum of the average self-concept scores of all respondents, and N represents the total number of respondents.

According to Vrey and Venter (1983:18), a raw score of 56 is comparable with a stanine of 2, which indicates a low self-concept. This indicates that the average self-concept of the delinquent group falls in the low self-concept category.

#### **5.2.2 Comparison between the average scores on each dimension for the two groups**

The sub-total scores of the non-delinquent group in all the dimensions are lower than those of the delinquent group. This information is given in Table 5:3.

**Table 5.3: Comparison between average scores on each dimension for the two groups**

	DIMENSIONS	RAW SCORES Non-delinquent group	RAW SCORES Delinquent group
a	PHYSICAL SELF	10,95	10,85
b	PERSONAL SELF	11,1	9,35
c	FAMILY SELF	13,8	11,05
d	SOCIAL SELF	11,5	10,55
e	MORAL SELF	11,2	9,65
f	SELF CRITICISM	4,9	4,85
	AVERAGE RAW SCORES	64,4	56,3

### 5.2.3 Conclusions based on the self-concept scores

From the above data (table 5.2), it is clear that 18 respondents in the delinquent group have a low general self-concept, and only two have a medium self-concept. It can therefore be concluded that this group of juvenile delinquents have a low, general self-concept. This is confirmed by the low average stanine of 2.

In the non-delinquent group (table 5.1) there are nine respondents with a low general self-concept. Eleven respondents have a medium general self-concept. In this instance, it can be concluded that the non-delinquent group has a medium general self-concept. This is confirmed by a medium average stanine of 4.

When the average scores of the sub-tests for the Adolescent Self-concept Scale for the delinquent group are compared to those of the non-delinquent group (table 5.3), it becomes clear that the delinquent group achieved low scores in all six dimensions. This brings us to the conclusion that the non-delinquent group has a higher general self-concept than the delinquent group.

The average general self-concept stanine for the delinquent group is 2 while that of the non-delinquent group is 4. The standard deviation of the Adolescent Self-concept Scale is 1,96. The difference between the average general self-concept of the delinquent and the non-delinquent groups is more than 2. The difference is actually 2,04, therefore it can be concluded that the non-delinquent group has a significantly higher self-concept than the non-delinquent group. Although there is a clear difference between self-concepts of the delinquent and the non-delinquent group, the outcome of this research can not be generalised as the two groups are not representative of all adolescents in the population of South Africa.

### 5.3 IN-DEPTH INVESTIGATION ON ONE RESPONDENT FROM THE DELINQUENT GROUP

The respondent who was chosen on a random basis from the group of legal delinquents is respondent number eight. The following media were administered.

- Interview
- The Adolescent Self-concept Scale (ASCS)
- The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

#### 5.3.1 Identifying data

Name	Peter
Age	18
Sex	Male
Class	Grade 12

The interpretation of the media used in the in-depth investigation will be done as follows:

- Background information of the respondent will be given.
- The interview will be interpreted and conclusions will be given.
- The Adolescent Self-concept Scale (ASCS) will be interpreted.
- The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) will be interpreted.
- In conclusion, an integrated personal image of the respondent will be given.

### 5.3.2 Interview

#### 5.3.2.1 *Family background*

Peter is the first child in a family of four children. He has two sisters and a brother. His sisters are in Grade 7 and 9, and his brother is in Grade 1. Peter lives in the vicinity of Pietersburg. He has never lived with his biological parents, but mostly with his maternal grandmother.

During the interview Peter reported that he lives in a rented room closer to school as it makes it easier for him to be at school on time. When he lived with his aunt, Peter daily traveled 50km to and from school. He indicated that he is happy with the family he is renting the room from. They share meals with the *landlady*, whom he calls *Aunt*, and her two sons.

He points out that he is closer to his grandmother and the third born sister in the family than to his mother. He seldom visits his mother, and when he does, it is just for the sake of his two sisters and brother. They speak Sepedi at home.

The family are members of the Roman Catholic Church. He rarely attends church services, as there is no Roman Catholic Church in the vicinity of his new home. When he does attend church services it is either at the Methodist Church or the Dutch Reformed Church, as they are near his new home. He prefers the Methodist Church as most of his friends attend services there. He has no plans of changing churches as he already has certificates from the Roman Catholic Church.

#### 5.3.2.2 *Developmental history*

Peter's parents were not available for an interview, therefore much of the information in this regard will come from Peter himself. Only the functional image will be dealt with in detail.



As Peter has never lived with his family, he was unable to provide information on his developmental achievements. Although Peter's functional image seems very good, he reports that he experiences problems with standing for long periods, especially in the sun. He reports that he easily loses consciousness (fainting).

#### 5.3.2.3 *School*

Peter likes school and feels it is the only way to ensure a good future for himself. He reports that he has never had to repeat any class throughout his school career. He indicates that he likes his teachers as they are good at teaching and he is hoping to obtain a minimum D symbol at the end of the year. He enjoys his Geography teacher as "she is funny and I feel free when she teaches". Peter's matric subjects are: Sepedi, English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, Technical Drawing, Woodwork and Geography.

Some of Peter's classmates' actions are a concern to him. According to him they "are boring" as they usually gossip about him in his presence. He wishes to know what they have to say about him, but unfortunately it is difficult. This makes him feel sad and despondent and he often considers physically attacking them, but he always manages to remain calm.

#### 5.3.2.4 *Free time*

Peter states that he worries a lot when he is not busy, then he resorts to playing music or reading magazines about hip-hop music. Peter is not involved in any kind of sport. He states that he has very few friends of the same sex but several of the opposite sex.

#### 5.3.2.5 *Psycho-sexual development*

Peter can not recall at what age he started fantasising about girls. At the moment he has several girl friends. He has only one intimate girlfriend with whom he practices safe sex. He explains safe sex as always using a condom whenever they get involved in sexual activities.

#### 5.3.2.6 *Traumatic experience*

Peter relates an incident which happened to him when he was still a baby, which was told to him by his grandmother. This incident helped to answer some questions he had about himself.

Peter learnt from his grandmother that his mother left him in a veld at a tender age, where he was picked up and taken to the police. His grandmother recognised him from pictures broadcast on television and fetched him. His mother was nowhere to be found and Peter remained with his grandmother until he was five years old, at which time his mother resurfaced. Peter stated that "...my mother pretended to love me and took me from my grandmother". When Peter reached school going age, he was *ignored* by his mother, while his younger sister was sent to a nursery school. Peter remained at home. Once again he was taken away by his grandmother, who has been taking care of him and sending him to school ever since.

He explains that all the actions on the part of his mother has caused him not to like her. He seldom visits her. When he does, he will greet her on arrival but that will be the end of their conversation and he concentrates on his brother and sisters.

Peter explained that, at one stage, he felt so worthless (negative self-talk) that he decided to run away from his grandmother's home and join the homeless children in the streets of Pietersburg. He states that he felt happy with the other children in the street, but experienced problems with the older children in the group. They physically abused the younger children and took their food, and he did not escape this treatment. Winter was a very traumatic time for Peter, as it was very cold and they had no blankets. They were often told by the police to move from sheltered places, and then had to face the cold again. Peter reports that he did not really enjoy life on the street, as it involved using drugs such as glue and alcohol, and at times stealing from shoppers. Ironically, he states that even in those conditions, it was better than being at home. Peter indicated that he is very grateful to his grandmother, who searched for him, and took him back home with her.

The other traumatic experience related by Peter, involved him spending five days in police cells in April 2000. In this instance, Peter himself and a friend stole a cell phone belonging to a lecturer of the University of Natal who visited their school. According to the teachers, he committed this crime while the school was still investigating another charge against Peter. This one involved the theft of a teacher's cellphone. Peter was arrested after the lecturer laid a charge of theft. He was the only real suspect, and he did indeed return the goods and was released from jail.

Peter reported that life in jail was very bad, as all the facilities are in a bad condition, and that fights would often break out between the other inmates.

According to the headmaster, Peter also stole liquor from a teacher, while on an educational tour in May 2000. Peter escaped punishment for this action, as teachers are not allowed to use liquor on duty, and therefore could not report him.

#### *5.3.2.7 Future plans*

Peter is planning on becoming a civil engineer, and would like to obtain more information about this career. He further plans to be helpful towards the community, especially the needy. When asked about his quest to help the needy, he responded by saying "I know how it is out there in the cold, the rain and the hunger". It should be remembered that Peter had been living in the ghettos as a street kid. He states that he is very grateful to his grandmother who had him traced and brought him back to life.

#### *5.3.2.8 Conclusion based on the interview*

Peter's family is detached and seems to have lost all sense of being a family. This causes insecurity and uncertainty in Peter's life which may degenerate into anxiety, depression and negativity regarding his future. Peter was left to his own devices at an early stage. His involvement, experience and meaning attribution was never nurtured properly, and it is therefore not surprising that he is experiencing some ambivalence towards his parents and family. This effect can already be seen in his inability to establish meaningful relationships with his peers.

One issue that emerged during the research is Peter's unmeasured admiration for his female Geography teacher, who seems to have accepted Peter without prejudice. At the time when Peter used to keep his lunch box in her office, certain items started disappearing. She realised that Peter might have been responsible for taking the missing things, only when he was accused of stealing cellular phones and arrested. It is the opinion of the researcher that to Peter, the Geography teacher may be representing or replacing the mother figure whom Peter never had a chance to live with, or experienced the love and warmth a mother usually provides for her children.

There are indications of mother-son conflict as Peter does not identify with his mother at all. The question arises: How does this negative relationship affect the formation of Peter's self-concept and the development of his psychic aspects? Peter stated that what his mother did to him at an early age, was the worst thing that has ever happened to him, but that he is happy now that he has been able to answer some of the questions that have been troubling him for so long.

Peter seems to be dealing with this trauma by showing poor impulse control which degenerates into aggression towards the mother. His strategy is to stop visiting and to close all channels of communication with her. When he does visit her house, he perceives this as visiting his sisters and brother. On arrival he greets her but will then concentrate only on the children. This appears to be what Stuart and Sundeen (1991:844) call disconfirmation in communication, since the mother may view the situation as Peter having changed his mind regarding communication with her, only to realise that her expectations are disconfirmed by his actions. This is not an ideal situation as it may end up in depression for both parties. Family therapy is necessary to resolve this situation.

If Peter's attitude of working hard and passing his examinations at the end of the year carry water, it is within his ability to become a better person. His teachers confirm that he is bright and that a lot is expected from him at the end of the school year. One would therefore postulate that with love, care, respect and support, Peter may have a better future. In this regard, the school requested of the researcher to keep contact with Peter on a regular basis for guidance in various aspects of life, and counseling when necessary.

### 5.3.3 The Adolescent Self-concept Scale

Peter has a general self-concept score of 49, which corresponds with a stanine of one. This indicates that he has a very low self-concept.

The Adolescent Self-concept Scale will now be interpreted according to Peter's responses.

The items of each dimension are grouped together in three categories namely; *identity, acceptance and behaviour*. Each item has two descriptions of which an individual must choose only one. A choice that represents a low self-concept is not credited. The description that indicates an individual with a high self-concept is awarded a credit if chosen. The descriptions which appear below are those chosen by Peter. The descriptions in which no credit was given (*those indicating a low self-concept*) are indicated with an X. A short summary will be given at the end of every dimension.

#### *Dimension I: Physical self*

##### Identity

- He is usually in perfect health.
- He considers himself attractive.
- He likes to be well dressed and neat in all circumstances.
- He is usually aware of pain somewhere in his body. X
- He is usually untidy. X
- He is usually aware of feeling unwell.

##### Acceptance

- He feels his weight is correct.
- He is satisfied with his appearance.
- He feels perfectly happy about his height.

- He feels dissatisfied with certain aspects of his physical appearance and would change them if he could. X
- He is satisfied with the state of his health.
- He is satisfied with the attention he gets from the opposite sex.

#### Behaviour

- He likes to care for his body to the best of his ability.
- He enjoys exacting work.
- He feels very energetic most of the time.
- He is very clumsy and awkward in certain situations. X
- He hardly ever suffers from nervousness.
- He is easily worried. X

TOTAL SCORE: 13

#### *Conclusion based on the physical self*

Peter's self-concept with regard to the physical self is average (medium). Considering his history, one feels that with a little more emotional support, he might realise that he is worthy of being human and may therefore start to view himself in a different light. His tendency to worry about his perception of the physical self may be averted.

#### *Dimension II: Personal self*

##### Identity

- He is only cheerful when things go well. X
- He is calm and composed in almost any circumstances.
- He feels inferior to his friends and acquaintances in many ways. X
- He usually remains very calm.
- He always feels inferior in company. X
- He is seldom if ever in a bad mood.

Acceptance

- He is completely satisfied with himself.
- He is as friendly to other people as he would like to be.
- He knows that he can usually solve his problems.
- He often experiences despair because he does not keep to his principles. X
- He is never envious of character traits, which he perceives in others.
- He can never persevere with a task until it is finished. X

Behaviour

- He can usually hold his own in any situation.
- He cannot tolerate rebuke. X
- He usually performs well.
- He carefully considers the consequences before he takes action.
- He easily changes opinions, he never disagrees. X
- He usually finds it very difficult to reach a decision. X

TOTAL SCORE: 10

*Conclusion with regard to the personal self.*

Peter's self-concept with regard to his personal self is average. He often experiences despair since he is unable to keep to his principles, which makes it difficult for him to reach a decision. Peter therefore easily changes his opinion on a subject and never disagrees. Fortunately Peter seems to be consistent with his responses as he indicates that he feels inferior to his friends and acquaintances as well as in company.

*Dimension III: The self in relation to family and relatives*Identity

- He has relatives who will support him in any situation.

- His family is not very happy. X
- He feels that he is highly respected by his family.
- His family seldom asks his opinion. X
- He thinks that his family does not love him. X
- He is sure that he is trusted by his family in everything.

#### Acceptance

- He is often ashamed of his family. X
- He frequently misunderstands his family. X
- He does not like family gatherings. X
- He is usually suspicious of his family's conversations and conduct. X
- He is very sensitive to what his family says about him. X
- He often feels unhappy because he has so little love for his family. X

#### Behaviour

- He is not particularly scrupulous about being fair to his family. X
- He does not take much interest in his family. X
- He often neglects his parents. X
- He always considers the wishes of his parents.
- He never has serious quarrels with members of his family.
- His family criticises him often. X

TOTAL SCORE: 5

#### *Conclusion with regard to the family self*

When it comes to his family, Peter has a low self-concept. He feels his family is unhappy and seldom asks for his opinion, therefore he believes that they do not love him. He is ashamed of his family, misunderstands them and avoids family gatherings. He is suspicious and sensitive about his family, and he mistrusts them. This causes Peter to take little interest in the family and to neglect his parents.



On the positive side, Peter feels that he has relatives who can support him in any situation. He also never has serious quarrels with members of his family and considers his parents' wishes. This may imply that he has not yet reached the post-conventional level of moral development.

*Dimension IV: The self in relation to the social community*

Identity

- He is always friendly.
- He is not very popular amongst friends of his own sex. X
- He is particularly popular with the opposite sex.
- He takes little interest in the doings of other people. X
- He rarely feels irritable and sulky
- He is sure that others make friends easily with him.

Acceptance

- He often wishes that he could be more sociable. X
- He often finds himself lacking in courtesy. X
- He is usually reserved and self-conscious with strangers and particularly with people in authority. X
- He is usually popular, his company is generally sought after.
- He is usually too self-conscious to offer help to other people. X
- He wishes that others would show interest in him more often. X

Behaviour

- He is someone who makes friends very easily.
- He usually gets on very well with other people.
- He always sees other people's good points.
- He readily forgives others.

- He always feels self-conscious in the company of strangers. X
- He finds it very difficult to enter into a conversation with strangers. X

TOTAL SCORE: 9

*Conclusions with regard to the self in relation to the social community*

Peter's self-concept is average in this dimension. Peter's main problem with the social community seems to be his self-consciousness. He indicates that he feels too self-conscious to offer help to others. He does not only feel self-conscious in the company of strangers, but is also reserved with people in authority. One feels that his self-consciousness may be the reason why he is not popular amongst friends of his gender and also why he finds it difficult to enter into a conversation with strangers. His main wish is to be more sociable.

On the contrary, Peter feels popular with the opposite sex and feels that his company is generally sought after. He easily forgives others.

*Dimension V: The self in relation to values*

Identity

- His behaviour is always irreproachable and honourable in all circumstances.
- He does not trouble to return change when it is too much. X
- He is very religious.
- He regards himself as a good person.
- He is someone with little love for his fellowman. X
- He is someone who does not feel particularly guilty if he is compelled to tell a small lie. X

Acceptance

- He often feels guilty because he neglects the virtues. X
- His religion offers him considerable inspiration, comfort and hope.
- He is someone who sacrifices much to help the underprivileged.
- He feels guilty because he seldom goes to church. X
- He often feels guilty about his frequent irresponsible behaviour. X
- He often feels guilty about the ease with which he tells a lie. X

Behaviour

- He rebukes people who use coarse language.
- He changes his behaviour if he becomes convinced that he is wrong.
- He usually decides for himself what is right and stands by his decision even though he stands alone.
- He often does things which cause him to feel ashamed afterwards. X
- He sometimes uses questionable methods in order to be ahead. X
- He often feels unhappy because his life does not measure up to the high standards which others set for him. X

TOTAL SCORE: 8

*Conclusion with regard to the self in relation to values*

Peter has a low self-concept with regard to values. He regards himself as someone who stands by his decision, but acknowledges that he sometimes tells lies, does not worry to return change, sometimes uses questionable methods in order to be ahead and also feels unhappy as his life does not measure up to the high standards others set for him. He also feels guilty about his frequent irresponsible behaviour and the fact that he seldom goes to church. There seem to be some conflict with regard to Peter's self-concept in relation to values.

Dimension VI: Self-criticism

- He seldom gets cross when he is thwarted. X
- He never thinks about proper things. X
- He is sometimes irritable when he is unwell.
- He does not like everyone that he knows.
- He is someone who often enjoys a shady joke.
- He never gossips. X
- He never becomes so upset when things go wrong. X
- He would rather win than lose a competition.
- He never postpones work to another day. X
- He never drives through a stop street without stopping. X

TOTAL SCORE: 4

*Conclusion based on self-criticism*

Peter's self-criticism is low. The rationale of this dimension is that a person who has no need to protect the self-image will not hesitate to acknowledge it when he is guilty (Venter & Vrey 1983:7). This implies that a person who does not need to protect the self will score high in this dimension. Peter's score is low and this implies that he might be 'faking good' in order to protect the self.

*Conclusion based on the Adolescent Self-concept Scale (ASCS)*

Peter's scores range from low to high average on the dimensions of the Adolescent Self-concept scale. Peter is obviously very ambivalent. At first he states that he feels dissatisfied with certain aspects of his physical appearance and would change them if he could, but later feels completely satisfied with his appearance.

Peter states that he stands by his decisions, but also indicates that he considers his parents' wishes. This may imply that Peter has not yet developed his own set of norms and values.

Peter is less critical of himself. He scores four (4) in the self-criticism dimension. He is either 'faking good' or just unconsciously evading his real self. The other possibility is that he is *creating an ideal self* and *cutting himself from the real self* which he believes has bad characteristics and wishes for a self that he thinks he ought to be. This may imply that Peter has an unrealistic positive self-concept.

It seems as if the main conflict area in Peter's life is his family. At first he states that he believes that he is highly respected by members of his family, he never has serious quarrels with them and that his family trusts him in any situation. Later on though, he indicates that he thinks his family does not love him, that he is ashamed of them and that he frequently misunderstands his family. Last but not the least, Peter is usually suspicious of his family's conversations and conduct, he has little love for his family and he does not take interest in them. It seems Peter experiences very little love, care, trust, respect and honesty for his family. This may be the reason for his score of one on the stanine for his average self-concept.

#### **5.3.4 The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)**

The following cards were used: 1, 2, 3BM, 6BM, 13B and Blank. For the interpretation of each card, two columns will be given. In the left column, Peter's protocol is given. In the right-hand column, the interpretation will be given. After the interpretation of each card, a summary of the card will be given.

<p><b>CARD 1</b></p> <p>...5" "Ok. I see a white boy</p> <p>and a guitar in his front.</p> <p>...2" He might be thinking that one day he may be a superstar with his guitar in his front.</p> <p>I think he wonders whether he can play it very well</p> <p>...3" and he knows that deep down in his heart he can play the guitar very well</p> <p>and he can be someone in this world, someone special.</p> <p>I think he is thinking about the way the guitar might change his life.</p> <p>That's all."</p>	<p>By waiting five seconds and first referring to "a white boy" there is an initial tendency to distance himself from the person on the card.</p> <p>Emotional recovery takes place, but there is still distancing as he only describes an object in the picture.</p> <p>He projects his need to be acknowledged and praised, but acknowledges at the same time that he does not yet receive the recognition he desires.</p> <p>"wonders" may indicate temporary uncertainty in his abilities.</p> <p>The uncertainty disappears as his abilities are recognised, although it seems that they are not generally communicated to other people.</p> <p>The desire to be special and to be admired is again expressed.</p> <p>The guitar is seen as representing something in his life that he knows may be a stepping stone towards his future.</p>
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### *Summary of Card 1*

Peter shows inadequate involvement in life through distancing himself from difficult situations. He also shows the need to be acknowledged and praised in what he does, so that he can feel special and be admired. The guitar may be representing the academic achievement he so desires, which can be a stepping stone towards his future. The fact that there were periods that he waited for several seconds before giving a response may imply uncertainty about the future.

**CARD 2**

...6" "I see houses and two women, one man and a horse in a farm.

...5" The man is supposed to take care of the farm and he is busy ploughing with the help of his horse

and the other woman is staring at him. She is thinking about what's gonna be the food on the farm.

...3" Or she might be talking to him so that he may not get tired easily. He must concentrate and keep on working.

There is the other woman with books in her hands. I think she hates the man and the other woman

...5" She gives them her back, that shows she is not even interested in ploughing.

I think all she wants is education because she has books and it seem she's on her way to school or library."

Adapting to the new stimuli is again done by waiting for six seconds and distancing from the reality by an objective description of people, the horse and the farm.

The different sexes are acknowledged, but not the fact that they may be a family.

The wife-husband relationship is acknowledged, with the man in the traditional role of breadwinner. At this point there is no verbal communication of emotional contact between the two people.

Emotional support and verbal communication from the woman is projected. The need for support within a family is recognised.

He projects himself as not being a part of the family life and recognises feelings of jealousy, as if though they have something that he has not. This may indicate aggression and feelings of rejection.

A negative coping mechanism for the feelings of rejection is to pretend that he does not care and is not interested in their activities.

His studies and plans for the future probably has to replace the feelings of rejection he experiences.

### *Summary of Card 2*

Peter still distances himself from the situation by projecting himself as not part of the family and through silence, that is, no communication. As in Card 1, studies seem to be Peter's stepping stone towards his future.

### *CARD 3BM*

<p><b>CARD 3BM</b></p> <p>...4" "Eer... I see a woman and a sofa (turns the card)</p> <p>...6" and a gun on the floor.</p> <p>This woman was shot ...3" badly but she is still alive.</p> <p>...2" She was on bad perse-cution maybe by her husband.</p> <p>Now she is sitting down wonder-ing; is someone going to help her?"</p>	<p>He again distances himself from the frightening and anxiety-provoking reality by waiting four seconds and by turning the card.</p> <p>By recognising and naming the gun, aggression is acknowledged.</p> <p>He recognises the possible physical and psychic trauma that he has gone through but ends on a hopeful note.</p> <p>The projected person is persecuted by someone in his family and he acknowledges the life-threatening reality of the situation.</p> <p>Feelings of passivity in the light of the intense psychic trauma are experienced and the need for help from an outside source is recognised.</p>
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### *Summary of Card 3BM*

Distancing from reality seems to be a coping mechanism under difficult circumstances for Peter. He does acknowledge the anxiety-provoking situation by recognising the gun. In this way he acknowledges aggression which is projected externally. His psychic energy seem to be depleted and therefore help from outside is suggested.



**CARD 6BM**

...5" "I see a man and a woman. They are both surprised by something that had happened. Their appearance shows that someone has died in the family.

They are both confused and they don't know what they will do because there is no one around. It is just them and the person who has died.

...2" The appearance of the woman shows that she'll soon fall down. She never saw something like this in her life before.

I think the man is thinking about the person who has died, about how grateful he was ...3" he can't stop staring at him ...3" because he knows he'll never see him again

...6" this shows that men have braveheart ...19" that's all."

The word "surprise" does not necessarily point to negative feelings. It is supported by their appearance in the face of the loss of a family member.

A significant shift takes place as a third - dead - person is brought into the card. The client projects their bewilderment with the strange situation.

He projects some sort of reaction that will follow and the reaction for the woman will be different from that of the man as she will "fall down."

The clients projects a state of psychic shock by saying things that may sound confusing to the listener. Sentences are not finished and feelings of loss and sorrow are projected.

The anxiety-provoking situation is suddenly escaped from by referring in a fantasy-way to "men have braveheart", and after a silence of 19 seconds by a refusal to go on with more detail.

*Summary of Card 6BM*

Anxiety-provoking situations may be overwhelming to Peter, and in such circumstances he seems to become helpless. This is seen in the inability to complete what he wants to say and by finally escaping from the situation by using fantasy. By waiting for 19 seconds and then saying "that's all" may be a further indication that the reality of the situation caused too much anxiety to face.

<p><b>CARD 13B</b></p> <p>..2" I see a boy sitting down. He is thinking about something. It might be something good or bad.</p> <p>But what he is thinking about, he likes most.</p> <p>...7" The sun helps him to think, the sun rises."</p>	<p>Intra-communication is described, but uncertainty exists whether it is positive or negative. At this stage it may represent a denial or an inability to confer his thoughts in a verbal way.</p> <p>He chooses to project positive thoughts.</p> <p>The sun is used as symbolic representation of hope which help him to order his thoughts.</p>
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*Summary of Card 13B*

Uncertainty within Peter's emotional repertoire is projected. Initially he is uncertain how to interpret the stimuli, then decides to revert to positive thoughts and symbolism.

**BLANK CARD**

...15" I see myself waking up in the morning ...3" but I am not in the house, I mean on land, green land and a place I don't know.

When I open my eyes, the sun is not the same as the sun I used to know. The sun was white in colour. When I stood up, I hear a voice calling me. I wondered where does the voice come from because there was nobody around, not a house, not even a single one.

The voice continues to call me, not by the name my mother gave me. She calls me a stranger. I just follow the voice until I reach it.

When I reach it, there appears a huge monster with sharp teeth in it's mouth. The monster told me that I'm the gift from above.

Initial denial of the absence of stimuli of the blank card is seen in the 15 seconds which he hesitates, and then going on to describe what he "sees" in a story-like way, referring to himself and describing his whereabouts. He depicts himself as being alone and away from home. Home is mentioned as if he should have been there.

He proceeds with the alternative reality. The fact that there was no one around may indicate feelings of loneliness and helplessness.

In this reality, he departs from the identity he associated with his mother. The path he chooses is not known, but the voice represents signs he may use to follow a path away from his family.

When feelings of approaching danger is experienced, the client moves into a fantasy reality where danger does not have to be real. Here the need to be special emerges again.

<p>I was scared to death and did not know what to do. ...5" and this monster was six feet tall and I was only two feet tall. It seems I was food for the monster, but I managed to run until I see a big hole, it was scary to get in there, but I know it was the way to get home. I just waited there until the monster was ready to pick me up, I threw myself in the hole."</p>	<p>Various feelings of fear, despondency and helplessness are experienced, also a small stature in the light of the big problem he has to face. Notion to flee in the light of danger and seek help from people close to him. Passivity is projected and the possibility to act impulsively in the light of danger.</p>
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### *Summary of Blank card*

Denial and distancing himself from reality emerges. Feelings of loneliness, helplessness, fear and despondency are projected. Peter reverts to fantasy when danger emerges. A possible low self-esteem is projected by comparing his small stature to a huge monster. The need to be special emerges once again. He seems to be passive, but impulsive at times.

### *Conclusions based on the TAT*

Peter seems not to be actively involved in his life. He distances himself from reality in most instances. He views personal relationships as rejecting. It seems that he views academic achievement as a stepping stone to his future. He also projects the need to be acknowledged and praised.

He is unable to face frustrating circumstances. He always forms some coping mechanisms to deal with fears. In most cases he moves into fantasy whenever a demanding situation arises. This also implies distancing himself from reality.

Peter acknowledges aggression and directs it externally. When the situation becomes more aggressive and calls for his intervention, he chooses to move into fantasy so that the anxiety provoking situation does not become real.

He seems to lack the psychic strength which is needed to handle some aspects of his life world and he probably has a low self-concept as he projects himself small in the presence of big life problems. His tendency to escape from reality may cause Peter not to take initiative and act autonomously, which is necessary for adequate identity formation and in turn heralds positive and realistic self-concept formation. As was seen in the interview, the mother-son relationship is very negative and he does not regard himself as a part of the family as also viewed in Card 2.

#### 5.3.5 *Personal image of the respondent*

Peter's personal image will be discussed according to the aspects of the self, social development and moral development as in chapter 2.

##### *Physical and sexual development*

Juvenile delinquents are children between the age of seven and 21 years of age. Peter is 18 years old, which places him in the adolescent stage.

Adolescence covers the stage in which children start experimenting with sexual relationships. Gerdes (1988:283) and Rice (1996:216) point out that adolescent's sexuality is merely emotional and contains strong aesthetic and non-sexual characters. Erikson (1963:263) points out that adolescents enjoy the discussions and the affection they obtain from heterosexual relationships they are involved in, not necessarily sexual acts.

Peter is happy with the number of friends of the opposite sex he has. He points out that he only has one girlfriend with whom he is intimately involved, and they practice safe sex.

##### *Cognitive development*

According to the levels of cognitive development as discussed in section 2.2.3.2 (ii), one would postulate that Peter has reached Piaget's level of formal operational thought.

There is not doubt in Peter's mind that he will pass his current grade at the end of the school year. He is hoping to achieve a minimum D symbol in his Grade 12 examinations, which is realistic according to the headmaster and his teachers, as they agree that he is clever. He seems motivated to achieve his dream as he states that he would not like to disappoint his grandmother. This is the first time Peter shows signs of positive self-talk, therefore one can assume that Peter has a positive academic self-concept.

### *Personality*

Peter seems to have taken a clear stand with his family and is assertive about it. He knows he does not identify well with his mother, but does with his grandmother, brother and sisters.

Peter seems to have a better insight on his academic self-concept. He indicates that he expects to obtain a minimum of symbol D in his matric examinations. His teachers indicate that they expect better results from him at the end of the year, if he can concentrate on his work and leave his unbecoming behaviour.

### *Moral development*

It is not easy to classify Peter's functional level according to the phases of moral development. He may be thought to be operating somewhere between levels 4 and 5 according to Kolberg's theory. Mwamwenda (1995:151) points out that at the levels indicated, and particularly at level 5, individuals realise that rules are to be altered if they are unfair. Peter altered the rule concerning respect for parents, as he felt that his mother acted unfairly towards him. The fact that Peter's functional level of moral reasoning cannot be easily classified, further seems to prove that it is not easy to classify juvenile delinquency as a whole (See section 3.4).

### *Social development*

Peter's social development is difficult to follow. As a baby, he was left in the veld by his mother, who then disappeared, whereafter he was taken care of by his grandmother. At

a later stage his mother resurfaced and removed him from the care of his grandmother, only to neglect him again later on. Once again his grandmother had to fill the gap left by his mother. For unknown reasons, Peter slipped out of her grandmother's hands and became a street kid. It may be argued that the pendulum of his self-concept lost its dynamism and remained rooted in the negative side due to parental rejection. At the moment he is living alone in a rented room.

From this information, one can postulate that Peter's involvement, experience and meaning attribution has not been properly guided, his social development is therefore inadequate. This may be the reason why he resorted to delinquency, which may be a coping mechanism.

#### *Emotional development*

Peter may not have a well-developed and balanced emotional repertoire. He is emotionally labile. His emotions have been scarred extensively, therefore he resorted to juvenile delinquency as a coping mechanism. His ego strength is at its lowest.

#### *Conclusions based on Peter's personal image*

Peter was thrown in the deep end by circumstances at a very tender age. At this moment he is still emotionally immature and labile.

Although Peter has developed *his own norms and values*, he is not yet experienced enough to make his own decisions and be accountable for his actions. Those *norms and values* may not be real norms, but defense mechanisms only. This assumption is prompted by the fact that he never received proper guidance, therefore his involvement, experience and meaning attribution will be incongruent with the real self.

His moral as well as social development is based on a shaky foundation and this has led him to become anxious and depressed.

He experiences identity formation as confusing since the main identity figure (his mother) rejected him long ago. This identity confusion might be responsible for Peter's delinquent behaviour since he might be finding the affection from the delinquent peer group as the home cannot provide for the comfort.

#### 5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the results of the empirical research. The Adolescent Self-concept scale (ASCS) was administered to a group of 20 non-delinquent adolescents and to another group of 20 delinquent adolescents. The average general self-concept for each of the two groups was determined. It was found that the non-delinquent adolescents have a higher average self-concept than the delinquent group.

An in-depth study was conducted with one respondent who was selected randomly from the delinquent group. The respondent was interviewed and the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) was administered.

The interview offered background information such as age, family history, et cetera, whilst the TAT gave information on the respondents personality and functional image.

As the study focussed on the self-concept, the question arises: How does the self concept formation occur in the presence of delinquency?

When Peter's situation is examined, one may argue that children become delinquents due to inadequate parental care and provision at a tender age. This brings about inadequate involvement, experience and meaning attribution, which implies that children are not exposed to challenging situations which are stimulating and thought provoking. This leads them to see the world through coloured glasses; that is, when situations which need their active involvement arise, they tend to distance themselves and deal with these situations and problems on a fantasy level.

As they cannot cope with the demands of life, they envy their counterparts who are able to deal with these situations and problems. This seems to invoke feelings of inferiority



and negative ideas within them. In order to cope, these children distance themselves from reality by being destructive, either towards themselves, or the environment. This may imply that they feel worthless, therefore a low, negative and unrealistic self-concept is incorporated in their intra-psychic structures. They always look down on themselves, and experience all their relationships as rejecting, therefore they are unable to self-actualise (see figure 2.3). The lack of self-actualisation seem to be continually replaced by negative coping mechanisms.

There seems to be a positive correlation between the physical self-concept and juvenile delinquency. Van den Aardweg and van den Aardweg (1988:129) indicate that most delinquents who are involved in physical aggression have sturdier bodies and are more muscular. These delinquents are also said to be very energetic.

Psychic abilities also seem to correlate with delinquency. Literature indicate that delinquents approach intellectual tasks physically, rather than symbolically or abstractly. Rice (1992:250) argues that delinquents have a poor self-esteem due to their low mental capabilities, therefore delinquency may be an over compensation for their inadequate self-esteem.

On the emotional level, Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988:129) argue that most delinquents are suggestible, stubborn, impulsive and unwilling to comply with authority. To make matters even worse, they are also less critical of themselves.

Chapter 6 will focus on drawing conclusions and recommendations for this study.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the findings of the empirical research were interpreted and discussed.

In this chapter, the conclusions drawn from the previous chapters will be given. The important points of each chapter will be summarised and the implications based on the content of each chapter will be discussed. The educational implications of these conclusions will be given.

#### 6.2 CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT AND AIM OF THE STUDY

- 6.2.1 The awareness of the problem and motivation for the study were outlined. The problem to be investigated was stated in the form of the following question:

*Is there a significant difference between the self-concept of a non-delinquent adolescent and that of a delinquent adolescent?*

What role does self-evaluation and self-concept play in juvenile delinquency?

This question led to the postulation of the following hypotheses:

- H1: There is a significant difference between the average self-concept of juvenile delinquents and that of non-delinquents.
- H0: There is no significant difference between the average self-concept of juvenile delinquents and that of non-delinquents.

- 6.2.2 The research methodology and the demarcation of the field of study was outlined. The concepts that are frequently used in this study were explained and a chapter outline was given.

### 6.3 CHAPTER 2: THE FORMATION OF THE SELF-CONCEPT

- 6.3.1 The *self* and the *self-concept* were examined. It was found that a child is born with the potential to focus on the self as an object and to gradually develop a sense of self and ideas about the self.

The physical, psychic and religious aspects were outlined, together with the influence these aspects have on the formation of the self-concept.

The physical aspects were found to be crucial from babyhood as involvement, experience and significant attribution are mainly achieved through the child's body. Children's physical development set the tone for autonomy and the ability to take initiative. For example, young children explore their world through grasping objects, crawling, et cetera. During adolescence, when heterosexual relationships are formed, physical attractiveness plays a crucial role. The self-concept is also formed through the physical contact with objects and people in the child's life-world.

The psychic aspects, consisting of the intellect, the emotions and the will, were found to be crucial to the emotional and cognitive functioning of children. Should the emotional well-being of a child be disturbed, he may develop negative coping mechanisms which may lead to delinquent behaviour.

Adolescents are intellectually mature and have the ability to use cognitive skills such as reasoning, problem solving and critical thinking on the formal operational level of cognitive development. They therefore tend to be more critical than before about hypocrisy which they may find in the belief system of their parents and other adults.

The components of the self, that is, the known self, the secret self, the false self and the higher self were investigated. The secret self and the false self were found to be more

relevant to this study. The secret self is the unconscious where negative thoughts are suppressed and stored. The false self refers to what one pretends to be, and this is incongruent to the self and the self-concept. This heralds the beginning of delinquency, as defense mechanisms such as lying and stealing are needed in order to maintain the cover up.

The components of the self-concept were studied. These components are identity, self-esteem and action.

Children who have successfully developed an identity are able to take a stand for what they believe, and become assertive. Those who have not developed a crystalised identity experience confusion and their actions depend on the approval of others. These children are prone to resist rules and regulations, as they do not know exactly who they are and do not know who to trust.

The characteristics of the self-concept were outlined as follows:

- *The self-concept is dynamic*, in other words it changes.
- The self-concept operates in the following *dimensions*:

A realistic positive self-concept

A realistic negative self-concept

An unrealistic positive self-concept

An unrealistic negative self-concept.

- *The self-concept is unique; and*
- *multifaceted and hierarchical.*

- 6.3.2 Psycho-social development according to Erik Erikson was studied. Erikson assumes that there are eight stages of development, and that each stage has a possible crisis which should be successfully resolved before an individual enters the next developmental stage. Failure to do so may lead to emotional problems and ultimately to behavioural problems.

The stage where delinquency is most noticeable is the adolescent stage, which corresponds with the stage that Erikson calls *identity formation versus identity confusion*. It was found that children who failed to positively resolve the first four crises, normally experience identity confusion during adolescence.

The maternal relationship was found to be very important in the general formation of the self-concept and self-actualisation. A good mother-child relationship prepares and equips the child to form healthy relationships in later life.

6.3.3 Moral development was studied according to the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg. Piaget's theory of moral development was studied according to the two stages of moral realism and moral reciprocity.

Kohlberg's theory of the three levels of moral development, namely, pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional moral reasoning, was studied. Moral development and cognitive development seem to run parallel with each other. During the adolescent stage, children should be cognitively mature enough in order for them to understand morality and apply such rules on their own lives.

Factors which affect moral development were outlined. These are:

- The role of cognitive development
- The role of affective development
- The role of peers
- The role of significant others
- The emergence of new form of behaviour

*Cognitive development* was found to be important in the sense that it assists the child in progressing from an egocentric, uncompromising outlook on life, to a more empathic and autonomous morality.

*Affective development* assists in the development of altruism and therefore better interpersonal relationships and positive self-concept formation can be expected when children grow up.

The *peer group* offers comfort for all children, especially those children who experience rejection by their parents. In the peer group children *feel safe to experiment with their opinion and to share their feelings*. In this way identification with various role models takes place. On the negative side, the peer group can also be a *springboard for the start of delinquency*.

*Significant others* provide *feedback* on children's behaviour, which strengthens the idea of the self-concept. Identity formation is also crystalised.

Behaviour that is deemed alternative to moral community laws creates dilemmas for children to deal with. The *inadequate handling of these dilemmas* may be a source of delinquency, even to children who were not delinquent before. This behaviour include, amongst others, divorce, same sex relationships, et cetera.

Finally, the theory of intellectual development according to Piaget and the theory of moral reasoning according to Kohlberg were evaluated.

As a critique to Piaget's theory it could be said that the ages set for the phases may be too rigid as some children reach some phases earlier than other children of the same age. Kohlberg's theory was also found to be biased towards women and certain cultures. Furthermore, Kohlberg seems to have based his theory on hypothetical issues rather than reality.

The criticism on the theories of these renowned theorists further confirmed the fact that one will never be able to fully understand another individual. Certain aspects will always remain hidden - perhaps somewhere within the individual, suppressed in the subconscious mind.

## 6.4 CHAPTER 3: JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Literature revealed that two forms of delinquency exist. The first type is legal delinquency which incorporates most criminal acts. Children who are called legal delinquents commit acts, which are in conflict with the law. Examples of such behaviour are theft, murder, rape, culpable homicide, et cetera.

The second form of delinquency is non-legal juvenile delinquency. This person behaves in such a way that basic human relationships and rules are violated. The non-legal delinquent is an adolescent whose behaviour does not violate any criminal law, but involves asocial behaviour such as lying, truancy, running away from home, et cetera. This group is also called social delinquents.

Literature revealed that, through many centuries, young people who committed illegal acts were treated in the same way as adults, and that punishment for offences was the same for both groups. Later on in history, a group who called themselves *Life savers* lobbied for a separate legal status for children. They argued that treating children in the same way as adults is a violation of their human rights.

According to the first juvenile justice system which was instituted in the United States of America, the state took on the role of the parent. This philosophy is called the *parrens patriae*. This heralded a change in the outlook of the community and the law on youth offenders as judges in juvenile courts assumed a fatherly role in order to see that decisions in the child's best interests were made.

Literature also revealed that in countries with democratically elected governments, issues regarding children are placed high on the agenda. This prompted the researcher to look into the pre-democracy period, as well as the present dispensation in South Africa.

The first democratically elected state President, in his first address to Parliament in May 1994, called on the "emptying of children from prisons in South Africa". This process did not run as smoothly as expected. The main problem which emerged was that the staff working in these institutions where the delinquents were sent, had no training whatsoever

with regard to matters concerning the care of delinquents. In order to manage the crisis, an *Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk*, which was lead by the Deputy Minister of Welfare and Population Development, was formed.

The DSM-IV classification system was used to classify juvenile delinquency. It was noted that this is not the only classification system available for juvenile delinquency and that various classification systems for juvenile delinquency exist.

6.4.4 Characteristics of juvenile delinquents were explored. These characteristics have undertones of negative intra-psychic talk. Amongst others juvenile delinquents exhibited the following characteristics:

- Low self-concept
- Suicidal tendencies
- Aggression and related behaviour
- Poor social skills
- Poor scholastic performance

6.4.5 Different types of offences committed by juvenile delinquents were examined. These offences indicate the undertones of cognitive and emotional problems which may manifest in the form of aggression. This troubling psychic energy is then directed either to the self or to the external world by committing offences such as drug abuse, vandalism, theft and sexual offences.

6.4.6 Boys were found to develop into delinquents more often than girls. Reasons advanced ranged from boys being physically stronger than girls, boys being more adventurous than girls to girls leading more protected lives.

6.4.7 The intrinsic and extrinsic factors that cause juvenile delinquency were studied. The extrinsic factors indicate interpersonal relationships, especially at the early stages of development. Intrinsic factors included biological and physiological factors.



Extrinsic factors, amongst others, seem to indicate that the state is not doing enough to combat crime, which children model themselves on and which is used as a learning field for their delinquent behaviour.

- 6.4.8 It was noted that in South Africa children are no longer kept in prison or police cells, but in places of safety or in the care of their parents. Only in extreme cases, a juvenile awaiting trial may be held in prison, police cells or lock-ups for a period not exceeding 48 hours.

In summary, it seemed that poor, unstimulating environments seem to be the source of all the problems. Children from this environment seem to feel inadequate in all the demands life makes on them. This evokes emotions which they can not handle due to their inadequate emotional repertoire, and they therefore resort to aggression.

The self-concept formation of juvenile delinquents, as with the self-concept formation of all children, should therefore be laid on the doorsteps of the parents. Parents shirk their responsibilities, and children then have to decide on their own how to deal with the demands they are faced with.

## 6.5 CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study was to determine the difference between the self-concept of non-delinquent adolescents and juvenile delinquents and to focus on the relationship between self-concept formation and juvenile delinquency in an in-depth case study.

This problem was investigated by means of literature study in chapters 2 and 3. The aim of chapter 4 was to outline the research design and methodology. The research sample consisted of 20 adolescents of whom 10 were legal delinquents, and another 10 were social delinquents. A control group of 20 non-delinquent adolescents was also selected. These adolescents came from a similar background and their age group ranged from 16 to 19 years. Their grades fall in Grades 10 to 12 category. By constituting a sample group of boys only, the gender variable was eliminated.

The following media were used:

Nomothetic research on Group A and B, which was interpreted quantitatively:

- The Adolescent Self-concept Scale (ASCS)

Idiographic research on one respondent, which was interpreted qualitatively:

- Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)
- Interview

## 6.6 CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATION OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The findings of the empirical research will now be presented.

### 6.6.1 Findings for the two groups

- 6.6.1.1 The average self-concept of the *delinquent group* falls into the low category of the Adolescent Self-concept Scale. The average stanine for the group is 2. From a total of 20 respondents, only two respondents showed a medium self-concept, while the rest showed a low self-concept.
- 6.6.1.2 The average self-concept of the non-delinquent group falls into the medium category of the self-concept. The average stanine is 4. From a total of 20 respondents, 11 have a medium self-concept, while nine have a low self-concept.
- 6.6.1.4 The above implies that feelings of negativity may be present in the life of the delinquent person, which may lead to anxiety and depression.
- 6.6.1.5 According to the self-criticism dimension on the ASCS, it was noted that the delinquent group is less critical of themselves. There is also no significant difference between the self-criticism of the non-delinquent and that of the delinquent group.

- 6.6.1.6 Although they commit acts which hurt others and violate basic human relationships, the delinquents indicate that they feel remorseful after committing the acts, that is, through intra-psycho self-talk when they evaluate themselves. Some indicate that they feel like crying, whilst others indicate that they become afraid that they may be expelled from their home or school. All this indicate negative emotions.

Lack of parental care, irresponsible parenting, curiosity to experiment with drugs and sexual relationships and negative peer influence are aspects which influence most of the delinquent's behaviour. Most of the delinquents who were interviewed in the Police cells were from restructured families (stepchildren) and had problems with one or both parents. One delinquent was allowed to leave on free bail, but his parents were not willing to come forward and sign the necessary forms in order for him to be released into their custody. These youths lack security, love and peace within themselves. This is in line with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where the need to be what they can be is endangered by lower needs for physical safety and emotional security.

- 6.6.1.7 In conclusion, one can infer that the delinquent group holds a more negative view regarding themselves. They do not possess an adequate knowledge of the self and the self-concept, their involvement is inadequate, and they tend to be unrealistic about themselves.

As the self-concept of delinquents is low, it influences their behaviour in such a way that they commit delinquent acts in order to call on people to notice them, and for attention. They need to be noticed and recognised, and they achieve this through opposing rules and hurting others.

## 6.6.2 Evaluating the research hypothesis

The research hypothesis of this study, namely *There is a significant difference between the self-concept of juvenile delinquents and non-delinquents*, can be accepted and the null-hypothesis can be rejected.

This implies that there is a significant difference between the average self-concept of juvenile delinquents and that of non-delinquents.

### 6.6.3 Findings and conclusions on the in-depth study (Peter)

The respondent for the in-depth study was chosen randomly from the delinquent group. Although he technically falls in the category of legal delinquency, the historicity and personality study did not reveal extreme examples of juvenile delinquency. It may thus be reasoned that he was not totally representative of the delinquent group. However, it was still felt that the in-depth study on this respondent could shed light on the influence a person's self-concept could have on his behaviour, and vice versa.

The respondent's general self-concept score is lower than the average general self-concept score of the group, showing a stanine of one. His life is characterised by conflict, which possibly inhibits the emergence of a crystalised, realistic positive self-concept. Due to rejection by his mother, he was forced to develop his own norms and values at a very early age. Unfortunately these were not real norms and values, but coping mechanisms which lead to stealing.

As with most of the respondents in the delinquent group, Peter indicates how remorseful and ashamed of himself he feels after committing an unbecoming act.

Peter seems to be very religious. To him the delinquent behaviour is caused by 'bad spirit', which controls people's minds, and cause them to lose self-control. It is significant to note that Peter does not take responsibility for his actions, but prefers to see himself as a victim who acts badly because a *bad spirit* is in control of his life. Despite his negative involvement, experience and significant attribution, Peter sets high future expectations for himself, which points to another conflict, as he is not realistic about his life.

From Peter's life history, it can be concluded that he acquired his low self-concept through bad experiences during his early childhood years.

In his self-talk and self-evaluation, Peter seems to think that he is not recognised. This may be the cause of his low self-concept. In order to boost his self-concept, Peter then 'acts out' his frustrations. The acting out actions, like stealing, seem to be a call to be recognised and a way of boosting his low self-concept.

## 6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The self-concept and juvenile delinquency do not develop overnight, but start developing immediately after birth. The recommendations that will be made from this study will therefore start from the early stages of development.

### 6.7.1 Recommendations for babies, toddlers and pre-school children

Children at this stage should be orientated to the new world in such a way that the relationships they form, will lay a good foundation for the formation of the self-concept. It is crucial to ensure that children acquire the capacity to positively handle the psycho-social crises of at least the first three stages, according to Erikson's psycho-social development. This is important for the later development of a positive self-concept.

In the light of the above, the following specific recommendations are made:

- Early caregivers should assist children from infancy in attributing positive meaning to the environment, to such an extent that the information they are confronted with is not too overwhelming and confusing. This can be achieved through helping the child to come to terms with his limitations and accepting them. Early caregivers should therefore not show any negative emotions such as shouting in the presence of the children and all forms of aggression should be avoided.
- Children should experience a *trusting and warm relationship* with their parents. This will foster positive self-talk in their self-evaluation and in turn they will be able to form positive relationships with peers, preschool teachers, et cetera.

- Children should be allowed to *take initiative* in physical, cognitive and emotional activities. Children who are not allowed to express their wishes in the above activities, tend to fall behind in the development of these modalities and often experience guilt and frustration.
- Children who are allowed to handle objects learn to take initiative and to be industrious. This heralds the need to be productive and a foundation for success in this technocratic era is laid. Caregivers should ensure that the objects or materials with which children are confronted are not complicated. The materials should be selected according to the children's developmental level, so that they do not feel inferior and inadequate.

### 6.7.2 Recommendations for the primary school years

Children cherish certain hopes and expectations about school life. Teachers should therefore build the capacity for the children to feel free and safe within the school. This freedom encourages children to be autonomous. Such children will later in life be autonomous and will not develop into a 'mass person', that is, they will not become overly group dependent. They will be able to develop their norms and stand by them.

- 6.7.2.1 Primary school children should not be allowed total uncontrolled autonomy. Teachers should communicate reasonable *rules* and draw *boundaries* within which children should operate. The rules should be enforced through an 'iron fist in a velvet glove', that is, discipline should be fair, firm and consistent. Teachers remain responsible to ensure that children are always functioning within acceptable rules. In this way children will always know the type of reaction they will get for particular behaviour, and this will strengthen the idea of the self-concept and the self. Children should still experience autonomy within the boundaries set by educators so that they can actualise themselves in an adequate way.
- 6.7.2.2 Primary school children are not yet emotionally mature, their self-esteem and self-actualisation is still susceptible to any impressions. The impressions are indelible. Any opinion about the children should be very well thought of and appropriate as it will obviously have indelible impression on the self-concept. Unwelcome emotions like anger,

fear, anxiety and jealousy may be solved through *explanations, discussions and reasoning*.

- 6.7.2.3 Educators should provide *realistic feedback* to children on their behaviour, and criticism should be constructive. Feedback strengthens the idea children have about their self-concept or the self.

### 6.7.3 Recommendations for adolescents

This is the period in which mistakes that occurred early in children's life become overt, that is, this is the period in which the self-concept crystallises. It is also a time of rapid change. How children cope with their problems and changes in their life, depend to a great extent on the way they are treated and supported by parents and teachers.

- 6.7.3.1 Caregivers should afford these children sympathetic and *unconditional acceptance*. Children should be given clear rules with limits, which nonetheless leave room for inputs from them and flexible enough to fit their changing roles. This will enhance identity formation and a positive realistic self-concept.
- 6.7.3.2 Children should be accommodated as *individuals* different from the rest and be encouraged to develop their own interests and strong points. They should be treated in such a way that they feel a sense of worth. They should never feel pressured to conform or become something they are not.
- 6.7.3.3 Adolescents should be helped to develop a positive self-concept by teaching them to *accept themselves*, as they are, that is, their weaknesses and strengths.
- 6.7.3.4 *Labeling, stigmatisation and ridicule* should be avoided at all costs, as it may lead to serious emotional problems, which may manifest in withdrawal, depression and in extreme circumstances, suicide.

- 6.7.3.5 Adults should be exemplary in moral behaviour and no ambiguousness should be spotted in their value system. Children should be allowed to enquire about the norms and values of significant others so that they can develop their own norms and values.

#### **6.7.4 Recommendations on juvenile delinquency**

##### **6.7.4.1 *Recommendations for parents***

- (i) Parents should, no matter how difficult the circumstances are, take the trouble to create *secure, caring environments* in which their children can develop optimally in all respects.
- (ii) *Early identification of problems* will help to limit problems that can later become serious. Professional help should be sought and accepted as it will help to identify the problem and help to mend the self and all its facets. In some cases the problem may not be with child, but within the family or even within the marriage. In this circumstances family therapy or couple therapy may be recommended.
- (iii) Families should involve themselves in *activities together*, for example, there should be meal times which are observed by all family members. Certain sporting activities should be played together. In this way, any deviant behaviour will be easily observed.

##### **6.7.4.2 *Recommendations for the Department of Education***

- (i) Teachers should be able to identify behavioural problems at an early stage. They should also be able to render assistance thereof. This then implies that the Education Department should create posts for counselors in every school. These teachers should not handle other subjects, but their sole responsibility should be guidance, counseling and remediation of learning and learning related problems. These teachers can also take charge of Employees Assistance Programs, so that they can provide therapy for staff members in order to improve working relations.



- (ii) Apart from academic activities, schools should also focus on the following programmes:
- Teaching basic values, respect for one's culture and tolerance of others.
  - Undertaking activities which foster a sense of identity with the community.
  - Providing information and guidance on career and employment opportunities and development.
  - Ensure that positive emotional support is afforded all the children.
- (iii) Schools should establish strong ties with the parents, community and organisations involved in children's well being. This will assist teachers in gaining more insight with regard to matters pertaining to children who are at *social risk* and are likely to become early school leavers.
- (iv) Extra-mural activities which are more interesting to learners should be introduced and implemented in schools.
- (v) An age restriction of 18 years should be enforced in public schools. This will help to minimise the influence the older learners may have on the younger ones. This recommendation is prompted by an incident in which the researcher witnessed an older learner attempting to physically assault a teacher.
- (vi) The National Department of Education should create strong and relevant psychological services in order for caregivers to handle behavioural problems at schools. To achieve this, people with relevant qualifications and experience should be employed, especially in senior positions like Chief Education Specialists and Deputy Chief Education Specialists. If the top and the middle management echelon of the Psychological Services are relevant, they will be able to guide the lower echelon and relevant quality delivery of service may be achieved.

#### 6.7.4.3 *Recommendations for all government departments charged with the responsibility of overseeing the juvenile justice system*

- (i) The Department of Safety and Security should ensure that there are no juveniles in their cells or lock-ups as it is constitutionally illegal to keep juveniles in police custody. This can be achieved by ensuring that all Police Stations have to convey convicted juveniles to the relevant care centres. Qualified civilians like psychologists and social workers should be employed to take care of juveniles before they are transferred to the care centres. This will ensure that the principle of *parents patriae* is achieved.
- (ii) There should be good liaison between the Departments of Safety and Security and Social Welfare with regard to handling of juvenile delinquents. In cases where one Department experiences problems with regard to juveniles' matters, the other should be able to step in and help.
- (iii) The Department of Justice should handle criminal matters in such a way that offenders will feel intimidated and think deeply before they entertain a thought of getting involved in misdemeanors.
- (iv) The corruption that engulfs the Department of Correctional Services and the Police Services should be stamped out. Children learn through modeling. When they observe criminals who were 'arrested in the morning being released in the afternoon', they know that committing a crime is not a problem as no serious punishment is meted, and they may continue with their delinquent behaviour.

### 6.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

It is possible that the results of this research may be limited due to the following reasons:

- The restriction of the empirical research to one gender and to one rural area;
- the language problem which is experienced by most of the rural learners could have influenced the responses to the ASCS;

- the random selection of the idiographic research respondent may not have given out a correct representation of juvenile delinquents in general;
- the softness with which the state seem to treat crime, may have lead to change in the modus operandi of juveniles at this stage, that is, juvenile delinquents may have developed new mechanisms of operation and new forms of delinquency may have emerged;
- as any other psychometric test, the ASCS which was used to measure the self-concept, may be limited in the sense that the respondents may fake good in their responses.

### **Recommendations for future research**

- The development of a programme to enhance the self-concept of juvenile delinquents may make a contribution in this field
- The educational styles of all caregivers who are involved with children and adolescents may be investigated.

## **6.9 SUMMARY**

Parents and significant others are not only responsible for children's physical well being, but also for fulfilling their higher order needs. Rogers (1951:200) calls the evaluated self a self-concept, which is the essence of being a child. The self-evaluation an individual undertakes on the self is subjective, therefore the identity formed from such evaluation can be unrealistic as well. Individuals with an unrealistic self-concept tend to develop some coping mechanisms such as anxiety and depression, which may manifest in deviant behaviour like juvenile delinquency.

This study has revealed that it is imperative that all the significant others are supportive to children. Children who know that they are being supported venture into the world without fear, knowing that whenever they meet problems they will receive a positive feedback about their behaviour.

Positive feedback strengthens children's identity and the idea of the self-concept and therefore emotional problems which may ultimately lead to delinquent behaviour may not be necessary.

**EVERY CHILD CAN BE A WINNER.**

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## APPENDIX A

### DSM IV Diagnostic criteria for Conduct Disorder

A repetitive and persistent pattern of behaviour in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated, as manifested by the presence of three (or more) of the following criteria in the past 12 months, with at least one criterion present in the past 6 months:

- *Aggression towards people and animals*  
 Often bullies, threatens, or intimidates others.  
 Often initiates physical fights.  
 Has used a weapon that can cause serious physical harm to others (e.g., a bat, brick, broken bottle, knife, gun)  
 Has been physically cruel to people.  
 Has been physically cruel to animals.  
 Has stolen while confronting a victim (e.g. mugging, purse snatching, extortion, armed robbery).  
 Has forced someone into sexual activity.
- *Destruction of property*  
 Has deliberately engaged in fire setting with the intention of causing serious damage.  
 Has deliberately destroyed others' property (other than by fire setting)
- *Deceitfulness or theft*  
 Has broken into someone else's house, building, or car.  
 Often lies to obtain goods or favors or to avoid obligations (that is "cons" others).  
 Has stolen items of nontrivial value without confronting a victim (e.g. shoplifting, but without breaking and entering; forgery)
- *Serious violations of rules*  
 Often stays out at night despite parental prohibitions, starting before the age of 13 years.

The disturbance in behaviour causes clinically significant impairment in social, academic or occupational functioning.

If the individual is age 18 years older, criteria are not met for Antisocial Personality Disorder.

*Code based on type:*

*Conduct Disorder, Childhood-Onset Type:* onset of at least one criterion characteristic of Conduct Disorder prior to age 10 years.

*Conduct Disorder, Adolescent-Onset Type:* absence of any criteria characteristic of Conduct Disorder prior to age 10 years.

*Conduct Disorder, Unspecified Onset:* age at onset is not known.

*Specify severity:*

*Mild:* few if any conduct problems in excess of those required to the diagnoses and conduct problems cause only minor harm to others.

*Moderate:* number of conduct problems and effect on others intermediate between "mild" and "severe".

*Severe:* many conduct problems in excess of those required to make the diagnosis or conduct problems cause considerable harm to others.

FROM: *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Copyright 1994, American Psychiatric Association.*

**APPENDIX B****The Relationship Between Poverty and Chronic Offending**

When I have a job, I don't get into any trouble. I don't like stealing. But when I'm broke, my need for money overcomes my feelings of guilt rapidly.

*Sixteen-year-old male offender*

Hey, I joined the gang because of the money I could make. I got tired of never having no money. I want the things every one else has.

*Sixteen-year-old male offender*

I was poor as a kid, and I never had nothing. It didn't take us long to figure out that we could make big money bringing drugs over the border. Then, I got into robbing stores. It went on and on, until I graduated from the juvenile system and ended up in the penitentiary.

*Forty-five-year-old ex-offender*

In my neighborhood, we were all into crime. It was a poor neighborhood, and our parents couldn't do much for us. If you needed a coat and it was winter, you went and stole it. I wasn't going to be cold or do without. We did what we had to do to survive.

*Seventeen-year-old male offender*

From: *Juvenile justice in America, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Copyright 1998: Prentice Hall.

**APPENDIX C****Explanations of Drug Use**

Kids do drugs because they want to be with it. They want to be hip. They model themselves after rock and roll stars. Others are influenced by peers.

*Aftercare counselor in a drug abuse program*

There is a lot of pressure from peers. They all do drugs, and they call you chicken and redneck if you won't do them. I've had a lot of people who turn away because I won't do it anymore.

*Sixteen-year-old former female delinquent*

Peers make it hard to get away from drugs. Hey, all my friends used drugs. Drugs were used at all the social functions I went to. When I quit using drugs, I literally had to isolate myself.

*Drug counselor in a mental health setting*

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